

MIGHT AND MAGIC

Exclusive
Strategy from
The Syndicate
and Ubisoft's
Frag Dolls

Dark Messiah[®] MIGHT AND MAGIC[™]

PRIMA OFFICIAL GAME GUIDE



Blood and Gore, Intense Violence,
Language, Partial Nudity.

BASED ON A GAME
RATED BY THE
ESRB MATURE 17+
M



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UBISOFT[™]

Dark Messiah

MIGHT AND MAGIC™

PRIMA Official Game Guide

Written by Michael Searle



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In Our Darkest Hour

You creep down the rickety stairs without the sound of step or scuffle. Hidden behind your invisible cloak, you quickly slide past the open door pouring out torchlight and guttural voices. Down the dark hall, a burly orc adjusts the rusted sword hanging from his leather armor. Sneaking up behind him, you slip your dagger through the back of his neck with an assassin's ease.



You will face enemies beyond your wildest nightmares.

Your free hand catches his chin but fails to slam his jaw shut. The orc's death rattle echoes down the hallways and the voices in the room beyond slow, then stop. A sharp command ruptures the silence and you hear clinking armor as five of the dead orc's comrades charge out the door and down the corridor at you.



Some of the largest foes dwarf you in size, but not in spirit.

You barely have time to taste the musky sweat in the air and see the gritted teeth when you drop your dagger for a warrior's sword and cut a gut-spewing swath through the first two.

More come at you. Heaving the closest one—his yellow nails claw at your shoulder looking for a hold—you send him back into the shadows to the rear, then swing upward over the head of the next orc. You have no hope of finishing them all in a fair fight, so you slash at the wooden plank supporting a line of shelves above their heads. The shelves splinter and crumple under the weight of the casks and moldy flour sacks tumbling to the stone ground.



Visit strange places and otherworldly lairs after leaving Stonehelm.

White powder billows around the fallen orcs like a morning mist. The gurgling liquid from one fractured cask spills on an orc's neck.

Too late you remember the orc you threw into the shadows behind you. It sinks jagged teeth into your shoulder and slaps aside your sword. A second attack smashes into your head and sends you reeling to the ground.

The room spins. You have no sword. No dagger. The orc splits a grin that says he'll enjoy chewing on your bone marrow and sharing your entrails with his friends.

Concentrating just enough to remember the incantations, you fire a magical Flame Arrow between the orc's eyes. It kills him before the stunned eyes truly understand that they've been beaten by a "defenseless" human.



Expect support from human guards and wizards.

That's just a small taste of what it's like to be the all-in-one fantasy hero in *Dark Messiah: Might and Magic*. From the warrior's skills of sword-swinging combat to the stealthy reconnaissance of an assassin to the big-bang effects of the spell-casting mage, you play each fantasy class at once, unlike most other games where you are forced to choose and master a single class.

Prepare to journey into the exciting story of the *Might and Magic* universe, where Vampire Lords meet

necromancers and the fate of the world rests on one man's shoulders. When evil threatens to plunge life as we know it into darkness, a champion will emerge to fight for the light: you.



You or the enemy will take wounds; there's no way around that.

How to Use This Guide



Beat dungeon monsters and you can expect treasure.



The first part of this guide provides you with the basic strategies for combat, spell casting, and adventuring. In "Combat and Tactics" you'll discover what to do, and not do, in the heat of battle, and the next chapter, "Skills," showcases the ultimate skill progression for certain play styles and class packages. The remainder of the early chapters give you detailed lists of weapons, armor, magic items, and the monsters in the world of Ashan.



Your spirit guide Xana sometimes clashes with your other allies in the game.

Beginning with "The Tutorial," you receive a complete walkthrough of each game level. What's the best route through the chapter? Which objectives unlock skill points? Where are all the magic items hidden? Everything you need to ace each story chapter falls in these info-packed pages.



From dark corridors to dawning skies, you will be called upon to use everything at your disposal to stop the threats to Ashan.

Finally, our extensive multiplayer section begins with the "Multiplayer Messiah" chapter. Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, and Campaign modes are vastly different from the single-player game, and here you'll find all the secrets to precision multiplayer action. You get dedicated chapters on each of the five multiplayer classes—archer, assassin, warrior, priestess, and mage, with tips from the Frag Dolls on playing as each—plus full, location-by-location map tours of each of the game's five multiplayer zones. Don't log into a giant free-for-all without it.



Combat and Tactics

A heavy burden has fallen on your shoulders. Master Phenrig has entrusted you with the Shantiri Crystal, an object that many powerful adversaries want in their hands. Getting the Shantiri Crystal to the wizard Menelag in Stonehelm is but the first part of a long quest that will ultimately save or damn the world.



Phenrig sends you out into a world of deadly peril.

It's not every day that you control the fate of the world. And not every adventurer is up for the challenge. Before you die to a spider bite or roll over to a black guard sword, you had better bone up on your combat maneuvers and battle tactics. Put in a few minutes of studying here and it will last you a lifetime in Ashan.

All-in-One Adventurer



You must prepare for all sorts of exotic challenges as an adventurer.

Dark Messiah encourages you to pick and choose skills that are simultaneously fun to play and help you overcome your current challenges in the game. Forget about being just a warrior or a mage or an assassin. No matter how much you specialize, you will always have skill points left over to spend on talents outside of your area of expertise.



You can never predict what situations you'll be in and what skills you will need.

That's both good and bad. On the negative side, you have to become proficient in many different abilities. That means practice, practice, and practice some more. Don't get frustrated if you don't master a skill immediately—as the game progresses, you have a lot of abilities to develop! The

good news is that you can overcome any challenge with your adaptable talents, especially if you keep a few skill points in reserve to spend on a skill you really need. For example, if you gain the Bow of Winter's Breath and want to wield its power, spend the points for Archery 2 and suddenly you can fire those freeze arrows. Hitting your target is another matter altogether.

Move Those Legs



From zombies to goblins, be prepared for a workout.

Zombies move about as quickly as a statue. You can almost stand still and dodge them. That's not true for the rest of the monster field. Unless you want to watch your health meter drop and drop, you need to learn how to dance.



Tip

Think of combat as a marathon, not a sprint. Don't rush to inflict damage on a monster if it means receiving damage back. Preventing damage is your first priority.

Combat and Tactics

"Dancing" means to move from one enemy (or dance partner, if you prefer) to the next, never stopping. You swing at one opponent, move to open space or the exposed side or back of the next foe, and so forth. An expert will gracefully cut away at opponents, while vacating his previous spot and thus avoid any form of counterattack. It's important to remember that dancing means you do not slug it out with a single opponent, hoping to inflict tons of damage, while the opponents' cronies beat up on you.

Weapon Mastery



Your sharp weapons, daggers and swords, will find their way into your hands the most.

Your basic weapons boil down to daggers, swords, staves, and bows. Each one has its own advantages and disadvantages, so try them out on weaker opponents before you get into the deadlier foes. Almost every adventurer should invest in Melee Combat to ensure the basic combat skills, and, of course, Archery if you wish to fire a bow.

Daggers are great for the sneak attack and pure speed in combat. A savvy fighter that knows the "dance" well can inflict just as much damage to an opponent as a huge sword stroke because of how many more cuts the daggers deal in the same amount of time. Get used to the steady rhythm of the jab-jab from your slicing dagger, and know that if you go for the big lunge, it will put you in your opponent's face. You don't want to wield your daggers against a large enemy group if you can help it.



Your daggers can still inflict heavy losses in a fight.



A big sword swing can knock a flying creature right out of the air.



Swords are your most reliable weapons—they consistently deal the most damage and have a longer reach than daggers. Plus, you get some powerful special effects on your swords, such as fire and life-draining.



Tip

Power strike sometimes breaks an enemy's parry, but Flurry of Blows seldom does unless the enemy drops his guard.

Tapping your mouse button delivers slashes back and forth (Flurry of Blows once you have Melee Combat 1), while holding the mouse button prepares a power strike. Pay attention to how you hold your sword in the power strike pose. Your movement after the attack flows from that pose. For example, if you swing from left to right, you usually want to move with the blow and continue to the right so that you step with the momentum, rather than against it. When you hold the power strike over your head, your next attack will lunge at the enemy, so prepare to sidestep or step backward if the attack fails.



Arm yourself with a staff when you want extra defense.

Break out the staff when you want to fend off large enemy groups. The staff doesn't deal much damage, but it has the longest reach of any melee weapon and it can stun an opponent for several seconds with a strong strike. Practice with your staff so that you understand how long it takes to sweep, and know when you're ready to deliver an overhead smash. You maintain defense with the staff, but fights take much longer. Hunt down the stunned foes and you can speed toward the end of the combat.

Nothing beats killing an enemy at long range with a single shot. No fuss, no injuries, no hassle. As long as you have Archery 2 to use most magic bows, you can deal lots of damage to enemies before they can ever hope to get in range of you.

Note that unaware enemies get more damage, and that headshots do more damage. The best way to kill in one shot is to shoot an enemy by surprise in the head.



From the safety of a building, the bow makes an excellent weapon.

Caution

If you don't kill an enemy with a single arrow, your foe may run away and alert others to your presence.

Be aware of several drawbacks. quivers have a random number of arrows, and you are limited to 99 arrows. Use them wisely. Second, magic bows have a recharge time, which means you only get one special arrow every so often. It's best to use the bow for a sneak attack and follow with spell damage or a melee attack.

Combat Maneuvers



You will have a much higher survival ratio if you plan each attack.

You shouldn't react to every battle the same way. Not only are monsters' behaviors different, but certain tactics will be more effective based on variables such as number of enemies, terrain, usable environment, etc. Plan your attack before you unsheathe that sword.

Your standard attack will be "search and destroy." Basically, you scout out an area to determine how many enemies there are, their positions, and any other factors such as traps and exit points. Decide which weapon fits the occasion and run through the first few seconds of the combat in your mind. At that point, you're ready to attack.



Search for targets, lock on, and destroy them.



Charge when you see an opening in the enemy's defenses.

Another approach is the "charge." Simply run for the nearest opponent, or the most dangerous one, and cut him apart before anything else can react. You'll call upon this if you want to overrun a single opponent (or two), or if you need to reach a certain objective first (such as triggering a trap or subduing a powerful necromancer before he summons forth an army of zombies).

The standard "range" maneuver keeps you at a distance where you use bows and spells to capitalize on the enemy's positions. Blast away to inflict heavy damage on foes before they can close on you, or pick off that one enemy scout so he can't warn anyone else. Always ready a melee weapon in case the ranged plan goes astray.

"Hit and run" is the trickiest maneuver. Generally, this is used against a very strong opponent, such as a cyclops, where you don't expect to defeat the foe quickly. The progression goes like this: attack, run to avoid the counterattack, heal up if necessary, return to the attack. You will need Heal or extra health potions the longer a hit-and-run fight goes.



When there's distance involved, it might be wiser to call upon the bow over the sword.



Hit and run works best against powerful enemies that take a while to whittle down.

Spells Management



If you want to cast your spells, make sure they're on your belt.



A Lightning Bolt striking an enemy across the courtyard or a Heal after combat are effective tools. They also require preparation time. All spells do, in fact, and you have to take care to set up things if you want to wield spells in the heat of combat.



Keep Dark Vision on your belt so you can always see in the dark.

Utility spells that you cast all the time, such as Dark Vision and Heal, should be on your belt for instant-click action. You don't want to run into a foe in the darkness, for example, without Dark Vision to show you where the next sword blow will come from. If you want to

use a particular scroll or think you should rotate a certain spell to the belt because you suspect a monster may be vulnerable to it, do so before you start swinging in combat. It's nearly impossible to cycle through your skills and set up a spell attack in the middle of intense fighting.

Stealth and Quiet



Sometimes you can avoid a needless fight with a little patience and quiet.

Not every situation need begin with a call to battle. Sometimes it's better to slip silently by the enemy forces, whether you are using your Stealth skills or common sense to bypass a difficult engagement. In this game, you do not gain experience from killing creatures; you gain it from performing important tasks. Those tasks may not be slaying 40 orcs in a row. Check your objective list and if you believe there is a better way around foes, take it.

Healthy Living



You can be back on your feet in no time with health potions.

Many items give you back health during play. It's important to know how much each item gives. Berry juice gives one food ration, and each food ration gives two health. A health potion gives you 10 health, while a full health potion restores everything. Your Heal spell essentially turns mana into health, as you can continue gaining health back so long as you have mana. Both the Ring of Regeneration and your Vitality skill gradually return health for free; if you have either of those, rest after major combats and wait for your health bar to fill. The key to healing is not to waste any health. If you are at 45 with a 50-point maximum, munch on a food ration or sip some berry juice rather than swallow a health potion.

Environmental Activist



Destructible objects should become part of your plan of attack against the enemy defenses.

The world around you is tangible and at your fingertips. You can interact with objects and structures, which gives you great flexibility when facing off against creatures who might not be as swift on the uptake as you.

When fighting, look for objects with which to abuse the monsters. Shelves can be broken, frequently toppling heavy objects down on opponents to outright crush them or trip them up. You can roll barrels down steps, or pick up crates and throw them as heavy projectiles. Cut ropes to release falling or swinging objects, and dungeon traps meant for you can be sprung on monsters in pursuit. Fire will be your best friend, when you force an enemy to back into a blaze or when you douse an area in oil and then launch a Flame Arrow to set up a fiery perimeter.



Trick an orc into the fire pit and you don't have to lift a finger.

Never Out of Reach



High ledges and holes can usually be reached with the faithful Rope Bow.

Once you gain the Rope Bow (in the first dungeon on Temple Island), keep your mind open to the possibilities of three-dimensional movement. Break yourself of the thinking that you must follow the corridor stone or steps up and down. As long as wood is around, the Rope Bow can lift you to the ceiling or through holes in almost any area. Escape routes you didn't think possible suddenly open up, and secret areas can be discovered with a pull of the string.

Allied Forces



Leanna and Percy serve well as companions.

At certain points in your quest, you gain allies. People such as Stonehelm guards, Leanna, or Percy will come to your aid and offer skills you might not have, such as special spells or knowledge of the area. You'll gladly accept their aid; however, remember that they are fairly brittle compared to you. If the fighting gets hot and heavy, order them to stay back or interpose to defend them against enemies looking to score easy kills. In most cases, if you lose your ally, you fail the quest.

Gearing Up



Have your best gear ready at all times.

Your belt should contain your best gear. It's probably best to leave one sword, one pair of daggers, one staff, one bow (and possibly the Rope Bow as well) and several utility spells and/or potions. With that setup, with a click you can have the right weapon or spell for the situation. Of course, you have a deep inventory and should tap into it whenever it makes sense. For example, if you know orcs are on the horizon, switch to your Lightning Daggers and exploit their vulnerability. Also, some weapons trigger and then have a recharge timer to recoup the magic ability. While a weapon is charging, why not switch to another and enjoy that special effect?

Monster Mashing



Monsters inhabit every nook and cranny of the places you plan to visit, so learn their tendencies to better deal with them.

No matter how many skill points you try to earn, your quest will always bring you into direct contact with monsters that want to take a chunk out of your hide. Your expertise with certain weapons and knowledge of the monsters' weaknesses will put most in the ground, but what else can you do against troublesome foes?



Tip

Show no mercy and impale your foes at the first opportunity. It's better to remove a creature from the fight than let it back in for future attacks against you.

Listen. Certain monsters make telltale sounds, such as the spider's hiss or the black guard's verbal taunts. Even when you can't see them, you might hear them and react before they get the drop on you. The nonhuman monsters of the bunch might also be tricked out of a fight. You can lure some of the dopier ones away from you by dragging a dead body as a food source and keeping your distance as they smell it out.

Secret Treasures



Secret treasures will not be in the places you expect, so look around carefully.



Throughout your travels, look for crates inscribed with a dragon emblem. These crates hold all sorts of goodies for you, from mundane food rations to the exotic magic potions. All adventurers should invest in the Alertness skill to spot possible hidden treasure sources. If you stand still for several seconds in an area with Alertness, any secret areas will glow blue and you won't miss out on a potential game-breaking item.

Dirty Tricks



To get out of a stalemate, fall back on dirty tricks like the low-blow slash.

After you've mastered the basics, here are some "dirty tricks" that veterans can use to confound the enemy. A thief with his Stealth skill might be able to pickpocket a key out of a guard's pocket without him noticing, but when you want to seriously damage someone, try these on for size.



A sudden kick will send an enemy to his death if he's near a ledge.

One of your standard combat moves is the kick. In a parry situation, use the kick to knock your opponent back and regain your positioning. Even better, the kick can serve as a knockout punch if you can time it to push an enemy over a ledge or thrust him back on a spiked barricade.



Tip

Dip your arrows into a fire source and suddenly you have flaming arrows that inflict more damage on a hit.

In the furious heat of battle, throw a low slash into the mix to score a sure hit. Before your swing, drop into a crouch and cut away at the opponent's knees. Even against shielded opponents, they seldom react in time to avoid the slash. Once you have Melee Combat 2, whenever you see a stunned enemy and can't immediately kill him, slash at his weapon arm for a high-percentage disarm move.

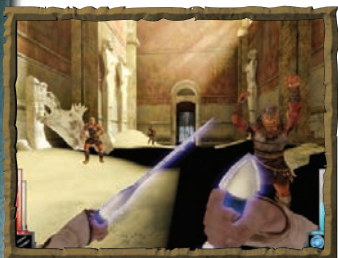


Hold your fatality for the toughest enemy.

Finally, in a large battle, show some restraint and nurse your fatalities. As you build up adrenaline from your multiple combat strikes, watch for the bar to near the top. When you hit fatality level, rather than throw your next power strike at the closest enemy, who may already be wounded, turn and attack the strongest foe. Your fatality instantly kills the enemy, so expend the energy on the most dangerous enemy in sight.

Skills

Do you want to tap into near-endless mana and cast any spell at a thought's notice? Want to pick up a weapon, or any piece of armor, and immediately know how to use it? Want to slink quietly through the shadows and open the most secret of treasure chests?



Melee weapons such as daggers and ranged bows can all be part of your skill package.

How about all of these at once? With *Dark Messiah's* three main skill trees, you can mix and match combat, magic, and miscellaneous abilities to create the ultimate adventurer. As you accumulate skill points from succeeding at the game's various tasks, you are rewarded with skill points to spend in any field that you want. Gone are the days where you have to choose between sword fighting and spell casting.



Tip

Remember, all your spells get infinitely more powerful when you hit maximum adrenaline.

Combat Skills



Unless you plan on going all-out spell casting—and that's very difficult—you need to spend some skill points on your combat skills, which revolve around melee weapons and bows. A few points will get your skill high enough to use most magic weapons, and a few more points will increase your damage-dealing

capabilities. At the high end, you can swing a sword better than the strongest barbarian and lop off heads twice as fast.



Flurry of Blows and Shield give you different combat tactics to deal with the enemy.

The key skill for most adventurers will be Melee Combat. At first level, Melee Combat grants Flurry of Blows, which gives you an unlimited number of fast strikes, and Charge, a powerful sprinting attack to stun your enemies. Melee Combat 2 gives you Disarm (swat a weapon out of a stunned enemy's hand) and Shield (block enemy sword blows and projectiles). At the top level, Melee Combat 3 earns you three abilities: Break Parry (series of blows that can break a parry), Leaping Attack (a jumping attack that can knock the enemy off balance), and Whirlwind Attack (spin and deliver multiple blows to an enemy).

In addition to all these fancy combat moves, Melee Combat serves as a prerequisite for most magic weapons. To use your better daggers, staves, and swords, you have to invest some points in the basic combat skill. And don't think those of the mage and thief persuasion can pass on Melee Combat—everyone needs to wield hand-to-hand weapons at some point.



All the magic bows have great special effects but require some skill to use.

Obviously, if you want to strike at range and employ some bows, spend those points on Archery. At first level, you gain a Zoom function. The second level gives you greater accuracy with a Steady Grip and the third level provides a Quick Reload. Three skill points

(bringing you up to Archery 2) is good enough to use all the magic bows, except the devastating Bow of Fiery Rage, which requires Archery 3.



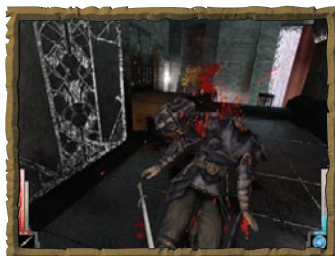
Strength builds up your damage per strike and drops monsters much more quickly.

Whenever you have extra points to spend, throw them into Strength. At level one, you deal +2 extra damage per attack; level two, +3 damage; and level three gets you +6 damage per blow. With this skill, you kill creatures quicker, which means less damage dealt back at you and more time to think in those situations where multiple monsters gang up on you. Only a spell-heavy adventurer should skip this skill.



Critical Hit can make that one strike the difference between overwhelming odds and dead enemies.

Critical Hit has two levels: Critical Hit 1 adds a two percent chance to double your damage with a power strike, and Critical Hit 2 adds four percent. For play styles that rely on major trauma from a single attack, such as a thief's backstab, Critical Hit is the way to go.



If you enjoy your fatalities, Adrenaline delivers double the excitement.

The ultimate skill in the combat tree is Adrenaline. This skill gives you two adrenaline tubes to store up your extra rage. In essence, you can perform back-to-

back fatalities when you cap off the adrenaline tubes. For warriors who think only with the sword, there's no better skill to maximize savagery.

Magic Skills



Flame Arrows starts the path down your offensive spell tree, and Telekinesis begins the defensive path.

When you don't feel like lugging a sword around, or need that special trick to get you out of a jam, your magic skills come in handy. Basically, the magic tree is split into two halves: offense and defense. Of course, there are times when spells on either side can go offensive or defensive, but in general, when you want ranged firepower you start with the Flame Arrow and when you want healing and manipulation abilities you choose the Telekinesis path.



Ignite your hand and blast away with your various fire-based spells.

Your flame spells, plus Freeze and Lightning Bolt, make up your offensive arsenal. Flame Arrow is the prerequisite starter spell, and then you can go for Fire Trap or Freeze next. Go with Fire Trap first in most cases—it gives you an area-effect spell at range—unless you plan on more close-combat action, in which case Freeze can help you stymie enemies.

Your third-tier offensive pick falls to either Fireball or Lightning Bolt. You can steer a Fireball to its intended target and it explodes to damage all those around; for that reason, it can be dangerous in tight quarters where you can get hit with the blast. Lightning Bolt delivers big damage to a single

target, and because it affects more creatures' vulnerabilities than fire, it's the third-tier spell of choice.

Inferno rounds out the offensive spells. It acts like a flamethrower and burns through anything in your path. The only drawback is that it sucks up your mana quickly, and you can easily blow through an entire supply of mana in a few seconds.



Your defensive spells might not pack a punch like Lightning Bolt, but Weaken softens up the toughest opponent for your sword.



On the defensive side, you have much less choice. You begin with Telekinesis, then can branch out to take either Heal or Charm, with Heal generally being the more useful of the two. Next comes your invulnerability shield, Sanctuary, followed by the powerful Weaken.

Telekinesis is a fun spell that can manipulate small objects at a distance, such as launching barrels and other items during combat. Throwing objects using Telekinesis deals much more damage than throwing objects with just your hands. Heal can keep you alive when you're light on health potions, and Charm turns human enemies to allies and adds muscle to your side for a short duration in combat. Sanctuary throws up an invulnerable shield that protects you for up to 30 seconds from all sorts of damage, while Weaken cripples a single opponent. Your defensive spells can prove a formidable combination when they augment more offensive abilities such as Melee Combat and Archery.

As powerful as your spells may be, they become even more powerful if you max out on adrenaline. For example, a Flame Arrow with an adrenaline effect will cast multiple projectiles at the same time, Freeze will permanently ice a creature, Fireball will outright destroy your opponent, Lightning Bolt will arc into an area-effect chain lightning spell and Inferno will deal even more damage than normal. On the defensive side of your spell tree, Telekinesis will allow you to grab and throw living creatures and massive objects with full adrenaline, while Weaken will permanently shrink your enemy.

Miscellaneous Skills



Your miscellaneous skills can detect traps or give you extra sprinting power.

If it's not a weapon skill and it's not a spell, it falls under the miscellaneous skill category. Skills such as Stamina, which increases your sprinting ability, and Alertness, which allows you to detect hidden objects, belong with any adventurer. More specialized skills such as Burglar, which gives you the hands to open a locked chest, and Mana Regeneration depend on what type of class you prefer.



Endurance gives you extra health to battle more monsters without a potion refill.

The Stamina side of the skill tree splits into two choices, Endurance and Poison Resistance. Poison Resistance is useful because poison can be very damaging, and you may not have enough antidotes to take care of that spider bite.

Endurance, however, serves any adventurer well because it pumps up health—an extra 10 health for the first level, an extra 20 for the second level, and a whopping extra 50 health for the third level. For those without a Ring of Regeneration, the final skill on the Stamina side, Vitality, slowly rejuvenates your health over time. Health is also required to wear heavy armor: 1 for chainmail, 2 for plate armor, and 3 for shadowsteel armor.



Increasing your mana with Magic Affinity means you won't run out of the precious resource in combat as much.



On the Alertness side of the miscellaneous skills, there's a path for the spell casters and a path for the thieves. Mages want the Magic Affinity series. Level one grants 40 mana, level two increases your total to 70 mana, and the third level tops your mana off at 100 points. Magic Affinity is also required to wear mage armor: level 1 for basic mage robe and level 2 for arcane armor. Mana Regeneration follows at the top of the tree. In the last levels, you may want to use heavy mana-cost spells like Inferno. Then you would have to regenerate your mana quickly, making Mana Regeneration especially useful.

The Stealth skill under Alertness will appeal to thieves, assassins, and anyone hoping to catch a few



Burglar opens locked chests, and your backstab move can split goblins in half with a single stroke.



enemies off guard. Stealth 1 allows you to move quietly, Stealth 2 offers you a backstab attack (which guarantees you an instant kill), and Stealth 3 lets you hide in shadows and pickpocket key items from unsuspecting enemies. Though a separate skill directly under Alertness, Burglar complements the Stealth skill by granting you lockpicking. Burglar also allows you to access items and potions in locked chests, and to circumvent locks that normally require a key.

Class Templates

Dark Messiah blends the traditional adventurer into a mix of your favorite skills and weapons. No character is exactly what fantasy enthusiasts know as "fighters," "wizards," or "thieves." You can cast a spell, pick up a

bow, or backstab from the shadows anytime you like.

Even so, if you want to lean toward a particular play style, we have some predefined "class templates" for you to try out. The templates show you the general order to purchase specific skills to maximize that particular experience, but even the most rigid of the templates has extra skill points available to branch out to alternate skills that might prove useful during a certain challenge in the game.

Brawler



An experienced brawler can disarm opponents or slash them to bits.



This is the "take no prisoners" warrior with a sword in one hand and a shield in the other. He steers clear of spells, except Heal, to gain more health to pound away at the enemies. Specializing in Melee Combat for various techniques and access to the majority of weapons, the Brawler likes to pump up his Strength to deal maximum damage and work up Endurance to suck up just as much damage himself.

Brawler Template

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Melee Combat 1 (1) | 8. Strength 2 (8) |
| 2. Melee Combat 2 (2) | 9. Strength 3 (10) |
| 3. Melee Combat 3 (4) | 10. Adrenaline (12) |
| 4. Alertness (1) | 11. Endurance 2 (7) |
| 5. Stamina (1) | 12. Endurance 3 (10) |
| 6. Strength 1 (6) | 13. Critical Hit 1 (6) |
| 7. Endurance 1 (4) | |

Total Skill Points = 72

Archer



The archer sheathes his sword for the grace of the arrow at long range.



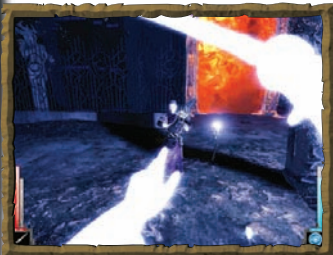
The subtler warrior likes to strike at range with deadly arrows that can kill with a single, well-placed shot.

That's not to say he's helpless in close combat; he can pick up a sword like anyone else, except he's not as buff in tight so he prefers keeping his foes far away. With enough skill points invested, he gains Vitality, perfect for hit-and-run tactics, where he wounds enemies, takes a little damage himself, then sprints away to recover his health before counterattacking.

Archer Template

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Archery 1 (1) | 9. Melee Combat 3 (4) |
| 2. Archery 2 (2) | 10. Critical Hit 1 (6) |
| 3. Archery 3 (4) | 11. Critical Hit 2 (8) |
| 4. Alertness (1) | 12. Strength 1 (6) |
| 5. Melee Combat 1 (1) | 13. Endurance 1 (4) |
| 6. Stamina (1) | 14. Endurance 2 (7) |
| 7. Melee Combat 2 (2) | 15. Endurance 3 (10) |
| 8. Stealth 1 (2) | 16. Vitality (12) |

Total Skill Points = 71



Learn a thing or two from the enemy mages and join them in the war of mega-powerful spells.

Power Mage

This template is for the aggressive mage with a penchant for fire and leaving defense in the closet back home with his spare robes. He has very little defense, but can light up the skies with a handful of deadly fire spells and an electrifying Lightning Bolt. Mana Regeneration keeps the fuel coming, and Inferno liquefies enemies that dare to approach too close.

Power Mage Template

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Flame Arrow (1) | 7. Magic Affinity 2 (5) |
| 2. Fire Trap (2) | 8. Fireball (7) |
| 3. Freeze (3) | 9. Inferno (10) |
| 4. Alertness (1) | 10. Magic Affinity 3 (10) |
| 5. Lightning Bolt (7) | 11. Mana Regeneration (12) |
| 6. Magic Affinity 1 (2) | 12. Stamina (1) |

Total Skill Points = 61

Healer



Unless you want to end up dead, the healer's main spell keeps his health total full.

The defensive mage takes things slowly and frequently uses the elements around him to his benefit. Heal replenishes health, while Charm turns a human enemy's mind to your cause and lends his sword to your side. In a tough fight, Sanctuary protects you and Weaken saps the life out of your toughest opponent. Because of the lack of damage, healers need to invest in some melee weapons, ranged weapons, or offensive spells to finish off enemies.

Healer Template

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Telekinesis (1) | 7. Magic Affinity 2 (5) |
| 2. Heal (3) | 8. Weaken (10) |
| 3. Charm (3) | 9. Magic Affinity 3 (10) |
| 4. Alertness (1) | 10. Mana Regeneration (12) |
| 5. Sanctuary (7) | 11. Stamina (1) |
| 6. Magic Affinity 1 (2) | |

Total Skill Points = 55

Thief



A thief can avoid traps and still hold his own in combat against tough adversaries.

A thief would be happy to avoid enemies altogether, and if he can't then he relies on a slit of the throat or a devastating backstab out of the darkness to take on the opposition. Thieves usually dabble in both Melee Combat and Archery, enough to use most items, and at higher levels, a thief can deal almost as much damage as the brawler. But can a brawler open a secret locked chest?

Weapons & Armor

Thief Template

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Alertness (1) | 9. Melee Combat 3 (4) |
| 2. Stealth 1 (2) | 10. Archery 1 (1) |
| 3. Stealth 2 (4) | 11. Archery 2 (2) |
| 4. Melee Combat 1 (1) | 12. Critical Hit 1 (6) |
| 5. Melee Combat 2 (2) | 13. Strength 1 (6) |
| 6. Stamina (1) | 14. Critical Hit 2 (8) |
| 7. Burglar (8) | 15. Strength 2 (8) |
| 8. Stealth 3 (10) | 16. Strength 3 (10) |

Total Skill Points = 74

Jack-of-All-Trades



The jack-of-all-trades can apply his skills to any challenge.

Most adventurers will be a little bit of this and a little bit of that—the jack-of-all-trades. He starts out with melee skills, then learns enough archery, spells, and miscellaneous abilities to adapt to numerous situations. Mastering a particular skill might prove difficult, but he's competent in most magic items and gains buffs to both his health and mana. The jack-of-all-trades has no glaring weaknesses, other than the fact that he isn't the best in all his categories.

Jack-of-All-Trades Template

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Melee Combat 1 (1) | 11. Lightning Bolt (7) |
| 2. Melee Combat 2 (2) | 12. Archery 2 (2) |
| 3. Melee Combat 3 (4) | 13. Magic Affinity 1 (2) |
| 4. Alertness (1) | 14. Magic Affinity 2 (5) |
| 5. Stamina (1) | 15. Strength 1 (6) |
| 6. Archery 1 (1) | 16. Endurance 1 (4) |
| 7. Flame Arrow (1) | 17. Strength 2 (8) |
| 8. Telekinesis (1) | 18. Endurance 2 (7) |
| 9. Heal (3) | 19. Endurance 3 (10) |
| 10. Fire Trap (2) | 20. Critical Hit 1 (6) |

Total Skill Points = 74

Weapons & Armor

Yes, Souldrinker can suck the life out of your opponent and heal your wounds, and everyone loves the explosions the Bow of Fiery Rage can throw around. No one will argue that the best magic items can power you to victory faster than a hyped-up cyclops versus a teetotaling goblin.



Before you know it, you'll sheath your simple sword for more complex weapons such as the ballista.

As a beginner in the world of Ashan, you won't unsheathe those massive swords the first time you stumble into Stonehelm. Until you become an experienced adventurer, you must wield basic weapons and armor, eventually working your way up to greatness.

However, knowing which blade has the keenest edge or which shield will hold up longest in a bashing contest may save your life on more than one occasion.



In the hands of a skilled combatant, weapons can do some serious damage.

The following tutorial—broken down by weapon, armor, and shield categories—explains the best situations for each item, basic combat moves to make the most out of your steel or wood, and how magic can upgrade your favorite, but plain, piece of equipment. Now you have no excuse for bringing a dagger to a dragon fight.

Daggers

Think of the dagger as an extension of your hand. You can slash quickly and deftly, in a blur of motion, inflicting lots of little cuts instead of one big gash. It's the weapon of quick-footed adventurers, and its specialty, of course, is the stealthy backstab from the shadows where its small point can inflict a great deal of pain.



A single mouse click makes a dagger sweep with your left hand; a follow-up sweeps right. Stack your Flurry of Blows attack by clicking forth a whirlwind of cutting daggers. A power strike move lunges you forward to impale whatever happens to be in front of you. From behind with a backstab, the power strike will kill if you've built up to Stealth 2. As long as you can dodge around foes quickly, daggers can add up damage in a hurry. Where a sword may inflict more damage in one shot, your daggers get off more shots at less damage each, but in the hands of a skilled assassin, damage-dealing can be almost equal.



Poison and electricity are your main magic tricks on daggers. You find the Poison Kriss daggers first, so your bread and butter move will be to nick an opponent with the poison, disorienting him, while you sneak around for the kill. The Lightning Daggers prove effective against electricity-vulnerable beasts such as orcs or facehuggers. Late in the game, you can beef up damage against the undead with the Daggers of the Dragonfang or deal damage like a sword with the Shadowsteel Daggers.



Dagger Hierarchy (calculated by base damage)

- Normal Daggers (least)
- Daggers of Frost
- Lightning Daggers
- Poison Kriss
- Gutting Kriss
- Shadowsteel Daggers
- Daggers of the Dragonfang (most)

Swords

Of all the items, you will probably be drawn to swords most frequently. They hit consistently for the most damage and have some of the niftier special effects, such as the life-draining Souldrinker or the fiery Earthfire Sword. Against melee foes that don't gang up on you and don't move faster than you, which will be most of your one-on-one or two-on-one fights, the sword outshines the other weapons.



A Flurry of Blows sword attack can brush back a lightly armored foe. Try it against an armored foe, or an enemy carrying a shield, and you're going to get smacked back hard. Practice holding your power strikes and watching how your sword arm moves. When you hold your sword to the side, you sweep across your body in the opposite direction; when you move with the blade it's doubly effective, as it sets you up for your next action in one fluid motion. You can also hold the sword high for a thrust, which deals solid damage when you strike true, but the attack lunges you



forward and may place you in a dangerous position should you miss.

At each of the forges throughout the game, you can manufacture your own swords. These serve you well until you can upgrade to swords such as the Souldrinker or the Sword of the Disciple (Collector's Edition). The Earthfire Sword, created with the flamegold bar, is the most versatile. It deals high damage, devastates fire-vulnerable creatures such as spiders and the pao kai, and whacks pretty hard even against fire-resistant creatures such as orcs.

Sword Hierarchy (calculated by base damage)

- Short Sword (least)
- Long Sword
- Souldrinker
- Naga Silksword
- Superior Naga Silksword
- Earthfire Sword
- Sword of the Dragonclaw
- Sword of the Disciple (Collector's Edition)

Staves

The staff is your weapon of choice against a band of enemies. Break it out when you want extra reach and stunning power. A staff deals the least amount of damage per weapon, and that's by design. It's not meant to beat down creatures; it's meant to beat them back so they don't swarm you. Nothing works better in a fight where you need a little breathing room, where precious seconds can buy you an escape route or a melee victory.



The basic staff move is to sweep or parry. Sweeping forces your enemies to stay at staff's distance, which usually means they can't hit you with their shorter weapons. The staff's key offensive maneuver, the stunning shot, triggers when you club an enemy in the head or jar him really hard with a power strike move. The dazed foe totters in place for two or three seconds, taking no action and remaining helpless against your follow-up.



Because swords and daggers make better offensive melee weapons than staves, it makes sense that most of the better magical staves deal more with spells than combat. The Soulreaver Staff sucks mana away from your opponent and adds it to your mana reserve, while the Spell Turning Staff can redirect a spell fired at you back at its caster. At higher levels, you can pick up staves that aid in beatings, such as the Shadowsteel Staff.



Staff Hierarchy (calculated by base damage)

- Wooden Staff (least)
- Combat Staff
- Soulreaver Staff
- Spell Turning Staff
- Staff of the Dragonbone
- Staff of the Firelord
- Shadowsteel Staff
- Staff of the Disciple (Collector's Edition) (most)

Bows

Invest in Archery if you want to draw back the strings of the serious bows. A formidable ranged artist is not to be underestimated; there are so many instances where you can eliminate a threat before it even sees you at range, or at least cut down on the numbers you eventually have to fight in melee. Most adventurers carry bows to keep their options open in any fight.



Unlike melee weapons where you can perform a bunch of different maneuvers and strike from different positions, with the bow, you basically pull back the string and shoot. Of course, you need to calculate the arc of the arrow as it drops over distance, and you have to lead a target that may be moving. It takes just as much practice to master a bow as it does a sword, possibly even more.



You really want the magic bows for their funky arrows. Each "trick" arrow has a unique special effect, so poison ones cripple the opponent, fire arrows set them ablaze, freeze arrows ice them, etc. You do not have an unlimited supply (unless you find the Endless Quiver), so be frugal with your special arrows and use them only on targets that require extra damage or a little pizzazz to distract them.



Bow Hierarchy (calculated by base damage)

- Short Bow (least)
- Rope Bow
- Bow of Winter's Breath
- Long Bow
- Elven Bow
- Bow of the Dragonhorn
- Bow of Fiery Rage (most)

Enemy Weapons

These are the weapons your foes will use against you, or the weapons you'll find discarded around Stonehelm or the various dungeons you frequent. Most of the time, they're either junk or you won't have

the skill to wield them. Every so often, though, you'll find something better than you currently hold, and the extra damage definitely helps.



Whether you steal a hook off a dead necromancer or pick up a hammer in the forge, these weapons are similar to your standard melee weapons, except you usually only have a single combat action or two with them. Something like the orcs' cleaver can pay off because it deals just as much or more base damage than any of the other magic weapons.



Enemy or miscellaneous weapons don't have any magic. You just use them to beat up foes the old-fashioned way—one bloody swing at a time.



Enemy Weapon Hierarchy (calculated by base damage)

- Club (least)
- Hook
- Necromancer's Staff
- Pick
- Axe
- Cleaver (most)

Armor

It's the stuff that protects your flesh and bones from nasty spider bites and deadly ghoulish claws. You will

wear something the whole game. Depending on your skill tendencies—combat, magic, or stealth—you have many flavors from which to choose and discover the perfect fit.

Simply put on a new armor suit and watch your armor class change instantly. The higher the AC value, the more protection you gain from physical attacks. Magic attacks are a different beast altogether, and you call upon spells such as Sanctuary to help you more in that regard.



Armor protection is great for reducing damage, you just don't want to lose any of your primary abilities in the process. The Chainmail and Platemail route works for a combat-heavy adventurer who likes to throw himself into battle. A subtler fighter will choose the Assassin's Garb with its added stealth. Wizardly folks will lean toward the Arcane Robes and its extra mana capacity.



Armor Hierarchy (calculated by base armor class)

- Basic Armor (least)
- Chainmail
- Mage Robe
- Assassin's Garb
- Master Thief's Outfit
- Arcane Robe
- Plate Armor
- Shadowsteel Armor (most)

Shields

Shields add to your armor defense with their unique ability to offer you a parry option that doesn't get in the way of your one-handed weapon. In the heat of battle, blocking with a shield and counterattacking with a sword can keep you alive better than all-out offense against lots of enemies. They can block attacks that can't be blocked with a weapon, such as the orc jump attack. They can also give shield bashes. Most shields are also useful for blocking arrows and magic projectiles.

Based on their construction and the abuse they've been through, shields have different durability levels. As you might expect, the more common shields found on city guards are only slightly better than your run-of-the-mill wooden shield and a step down from something you might find on a death knight. If it stops one deadly attack, it's all worth it, no matter what it's made of.



There are only two magic shields. The Lightning Shield electrifies an enemy while parrying, and the Earthfire Shield reduces your damage from fire attacks. You want them for defense anyway, so you shouldn't worry about whether it shocks or cools down a burn—but you'll gladly take the extras.

Shield Hierarchy (calculated by base defense)

- Wooden Shield (least)
- Guard Shield
- Orc Shield
- Death Knight Shield
- Lightning Shield
- Earthfire Shield (most)

Magic Items

Your first magic scroll will make you feel like a real wizard, your first magic sword will make you feel like a god—and that's not even counting the magic rings! Get ready to put on your Assassin's Garb because your enemies don't give you second chances and everyone, it seems, wants a piece of the Skull of Shadows.



Chests are the best source of magic items for your inventory.

When you begin, you'll rely on simple steel and the occasional potion to help you through your encounters. And that's okay. It definitely helps you appreciate the more powerful magic items when they come along, and you gain them slowly, chapter by chapter, which allows you time to play with them in combat and perfect their mysterious powers.



From items that propel the story to items that sever your enemies, Ashan gives you the best that magic has to offer.

As you progress, tune your belt to hold the magic items you rely on most. Generally, it's a good idea to spread out your items to adapt to different situations or combat predicaments—a dagger, a sword, a staff, a bow, and possibly some potions and scrolls. You don't want to line up five daggers on your belt, unless all you care about is backstabbing, and even then it's

probably not a good idea. If you start with the Poison Kriss, for example, after you poison an enemy with a power strike and the combat ends, you can always swap it out for the Lightning Daggers while the Poison Kriss daggers recharge.



Tip

Some items, such as armor and rings, are active all the time once you double-click on them. They don't have to take up valuable space on your belt.



Magic staves become an integral part of your arsenal at higher levels.

The following charts detail every magic item in the game and what requirements you need to play with the item. Remember, no matter how cool all the items are, you won't be able to equip them all—you won't have enough skill points to be an expert in everything. However, sometimes it's worth gaining a skill level just to add that extra power to your already formidable armory.



When you journey to uncharted territory, bring a potent supply of ranged and melee magic items.

Magic Items

Item	Description	Requirement
Ring of Regeneration	Regenerates your Health.	—
Ring of Fire Protection	Increase your protection from fire-based attacks.	—
Ring of the Phoenix	Once your Health reaches 0, the ring prevents you from dying and restores your Health. The ring then breaks.	—
Ring of Might	Adds +1 damage.	—
Ring of the Weaponmaster	Adds 2 percent chance to deal critical hit.	—
Ring of Arcane Brilliance	Adds 10 mana.	—
Endless Quiver	Give infinite ammo when carried in the inventory.	—
Steel bar	Can be used to forge a Long Sword.	—
Flamegold bar	Can be used to forge an Earthfire Sword.	—
The Shantiri Crystal	An enchanted crystal from an ancient civilization, vibrating with arcane power.	—
The Skull of Shadows	A relic from the death ritual of Sar-Elam, the mage who rose to become the the Seventh Dragon.	—
Stonehelm Guard's Shield	Resistance 180.	Melee Combat Level 2
Wooden Shield	Resistance 120.	Melee Combat Level 2
Lightning Shield	Undestructible, deals electric shock on attacker, on a successful block.	—
Earthfire Shield	Undestructible, increases your resistance to fire attacks when equipped.	—
Orc Shield	Resistance 60.	Melee Combat Level 2
Orc Buckler	Resistance 240.	Melee Combat Level 3
Black Guard's Shield	Resistance 180.	Melee Combat Level 2
Vampire Knight's Shield	Resistance 240.	Melee Combat Level 3
Shadowsteel Armor	Adds +4 Armor Class and 10 Health Max points.	Endurance Level 3
Chainmail Armor	Adds +2 Armor Class.	Endurance Level 1
Plate Armor	Adds +3 Armor Class.	Endurance Level 2
Wizard Robe	Adds +1 Armor Class. Adds 10 mana.	Magic Affinity Level 1
Arcane Robe	Adds +2 Armor Class. Adds 20 mana.	Magic affinity Level 3
Assassin's Garb	Adds +1 Armor Class. Increases Stealth.	Stealth Level 1
Master Thief's Outfit	Adds +2 Armor Class. Increases Stealth.	Stealth Level 3
Long Sword	Damage +3	Melee Level 1
Earthfire Sword	Damage +6 (+12 against foes vulnerable to fire).	Strength Level 2
Naga Silksword	Damage +3, increases chances of critical +2%.	Critical hit Level 1
Superior Naga Silksword	Damage +6, increases chances of critical +4%.	Critical hit Level 2
Cleaver	Damage +7.	Strength Level 2

Magic Items continued

Item	Description	Requirement
Souldrinker	Damage +4, drains life (30% of dealt damage) and gives it back to the wielder, increasing his health points.	Strength Level 3
Sword of the Dragonclaw	Damage +3 (+18 against undead).	Strength Level 3
Short Sword	Damage +2.	—
Sword of the Disciple	Damage +5.	Melee Level 1
Daggers	Damage +1.	—
Daggers of Frost	Damage +2, Freezes enemies.	Stealth Level 2
Poison Kriss	Damage +2, Poisons enemies.	Stealth Level 3
Gutting Kriss	Damage +4, adds 4% chances to deal a critical hit.	Stealth Level 2
Lightning Daggers	Damage +4 (+8 against enemies vulnerable to lightning).	Melee Level 2
Daggers of the Dragonfang	Damage +7 (+14 against undead).	Stealth Level 3
Shadowsteel Daggers	Damage +6.	Stealth Level 3
Daggers of the Disciple	Damage +4.	Stealth Level 1
Wooden Staff	Damage +1.	—
Combat Staff	Damage +2.	Melee Combat Level 1
Shadowsteel Staff	Damage +5.	Melee Level 2
Staff of the Dragonbone	Damage +7 (+14 against undead).	Magic Affinity Level 3
Staff of the Firelord	Damage +3 (+6 against foes vulnerable to fire).	Melee Level 1
Soulreaver Staff	Damage +2, drains mana.	Magic Affinity Level 3
Staff of Reflection	Damage +2, deals lightning damage when loaded.	Magic Affinity Level 1
Staff of the Disciple	Damage +3.	Magic Affinity Level 1
Bow	Damage +2.	—
Long Bow	Damage +4.	Archery Level 1
Poison Bow	Damage +2, Poisons enemies.	Archery Level 2
Bow of Winter's Breath	Damage +2, freezes enemies.	Archery Level 2
Elven Bow	Damage +5, adds 3% chances to deal critical.	Critical Hit Level 2
Bow of Fiery Rage	Damage +7 (+14 against enemies vulnerable to fire).	Archery Level 3
Rope Bow	Damage +1.	—
Bow of the Dragonhorn	Damage +8 (+16 against undead).	Archery Level 3
Bow of the Disciple	Damage +5.	Archery Level 2
Axe	Damage +2.	—
Club	Damage +3.	—
Pickaxe	Damage +2.	—
Hammer	Damage +2.	—
Hook	Damage +3.	—

Monster Handbook

They groan in the dark and make walking through a simple cellar not so simple. They turn an island paradise into a disease-choked, hostile territory. Monsters do the bidding of necromancers, need we say more?



From humans to cyclops, the world of Ashan breeds a diverse selection of creatures.



At every turn in the world of Ashan, monsters of some shape or size—from the tiniest spider to the hugest pao kai—will slow you down and attempt to hobble you permanently. They can slash at you, chew on you, claw you, or breathe poison gas at your face, and some of them don't stay dead for long.



Undead plague your quest wherever there are shadows or necromancers.



Fortunately, you have knowledge and some powerful magic weapons at your disposal. Once you study up on your monster lore in the pages ahead, you'll know whether to break out that flaming arrow against an acolyte or bless a special sword to deal brutal damage to the undead. Should you arm yourself with the Dagger of Ashes before heading into the next ghoulish-infested dungeon or ready a Lightning Bolt prior to a mix-up in the Temple of the Spider?



Demons are an integral part of the world—and your personal history.

Each of the following monsters or enemy NPCs (non-player characters) has strengths and weaknesses that you can play to, if you're smart. Read through their combat tendencies, habits, and exploitable vulnerabilities so that the next time you find yourself facing 10 to 1 odds, you'll think it's about even.



Some unique monsters, such as the pao kai and the orc leader, provide the biggest challenge.

Acolyte

Creature Affiliation: Undead

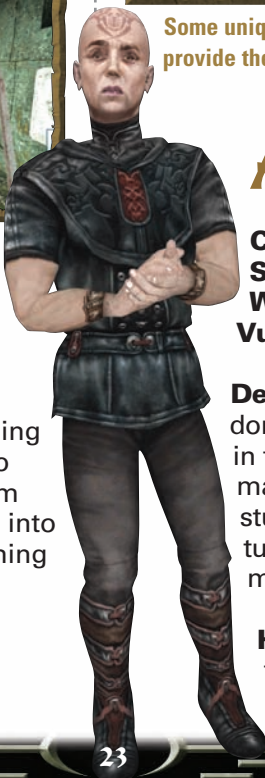
Strengths: Mobile

Weaknesses: No armor, no melee skill

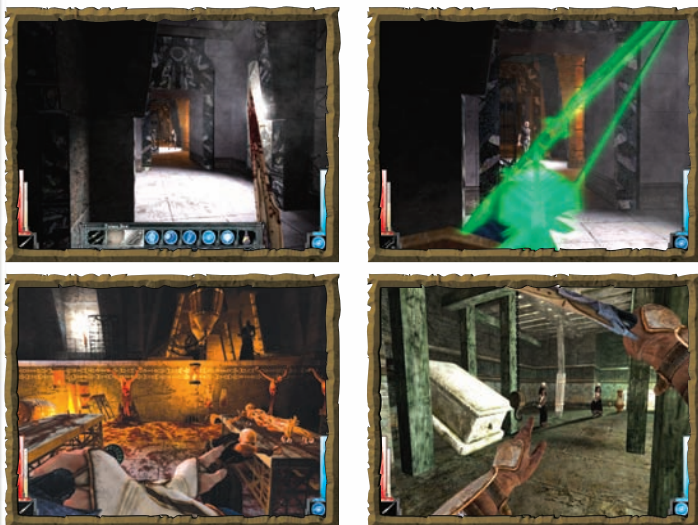
Vulnerability: Fire

Description: These necromancers-in-training don't offer much firepower or hold much sway in the undead hierarchy. They serve the necromancers to learn the arts, much as a student studies under a mentor. Given time they will turn into darker undead, but for now they are more human than not.

How to Beat It: Attack acolytes without fear of reprisals. It's like going up against regular townsfolk. The acolyte has no



armor and usually does not have a weapon. An acolyte will not attack the player. Clear them quickly so they don't distract you from real threats that are sure to be creeping around somewhere. Don't waste special ammo on these low-level enemies; a regular sword and shield does the job and saves the good stuff for the ones that count most.

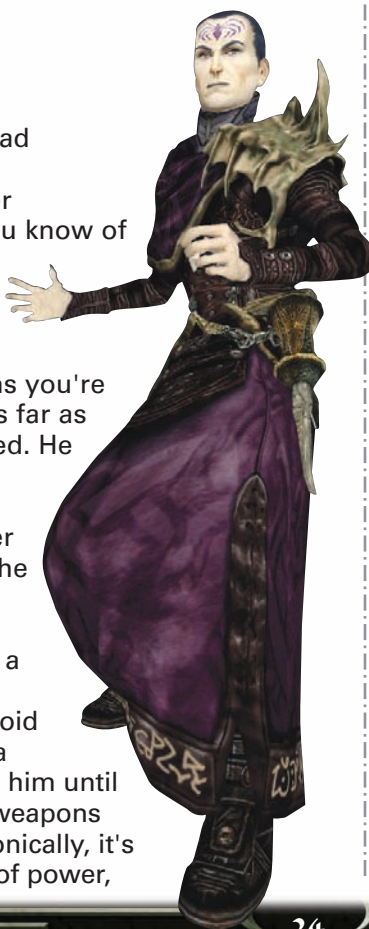


Arantir

Creature Affiliation: Undead
Strengths: Potent magic
Weaknesses: Lust for power
Vulnerability: None that you know of

Description: Arantir is the bane of your existence. He seeks the Shantiri Crystal, and you have it, which means you're public enemy number one as far as the Vampire Lord is concerned. He controls an army of black guards, ghouls, and necromancers, so it's only a matter of time before he gets what he wants.

How to Beat It: You haven't a prayer until you earn lots of experience on your quest. Avoid him early on—"run away" is a viable strategy! Wait to tackle him until you have a wealth of magic weapons and spells in your arsenal. Ironically, it's when he's in his own center of power,



Stonehelm's secret Necropolis, that he will be at his most vulnerable.



Black Guard

Creature Affiliation: Undead
Strengths: Good fighters, heavy armor
Weaknesses: Disorganized
Vulnerability: Fire

Description: Mercenaries to the core, these armored troops are hired by the necromancers to add muscle and intelligence to the front line. Yes, they might be a bit disorganized in combat, but remember they're working side by side with ghouls and zombies—the bar's not high here. Their indifference to death makes them little more than warm-blooded versions of the soulless creatures from whom they accept money.
How to Beat It: Slash and step backward. Dodge an attack and then counterattack where you see the opening. When you want to cut the legs out from under a black guard, crouch and swing for an instant leg gash. They will flee and call for help if you let them. When you see a back, finish the black guard off quickly. Keep an eye out for black guards with bows, or arrows will strike out of the shadows without warning.





Cyclops

Creature Affiliation: Unaligned or Undead

Strengths: Natural armor

Weaknesses: Vulnerable eye

Vulnerability: Lightning (Holy for undead cyclops)

Description: The regular variety of cyclops is a giant that smashes anything in its way. It's rare to see one of these in captivity. Necromancers can also raise a dead cyclops from the grave and create the ultimate unholy beast.

How to Beat It: Don't close in tight with these huge adversaries. Wait until the cyclops throws its arms over its head to smash you, then backpedal out of its reach and slash at the beast's eye. After your slash at its eye sends the cyclops to its knees, perform a power strike to finish the beast. If the cyclops grabs you, you



will take damage when it throws you, but get up and sprint to the side immediately to avoid its follow-up attack. Lightning Bolts also cause it to scream in pain, while most other attacks tend to bounce right off.



Vampire Knight

Creature Affiliation: Undead

Strengths: Heavy armor, expert fighters

Weaknesses: Melee combat only

Vulnerability: Holy

Description: The elite undead warriors of the necromancers hold respect among the ranks of the black guards. However, vampire knights are actual Undead, while black guards are human mercenaries. They are stronger, faster, and tougher in combat than the average black guard and are usually reserved as the shock troops of special undead envoys, such as bodyguards for the Lich Lords.

How to Beat It: You must be faster than the vampire knight to survive. A holy weapon helps, but your speed determines the combat. Slash when you see an opening and pivot



so that you are always facing a vampire knight's side or back. Never let one get behind you or you'll be mincemeat in two seconds. When a vampire knight mixes with other black guards, pump up your adrenaline on the regular guards and target your fatality at the vampire knight.



Facehugger

Creature Affiliation:

Dungeon dweller

Strengths: Flyer, electric attacks

Weaknesses: No armor

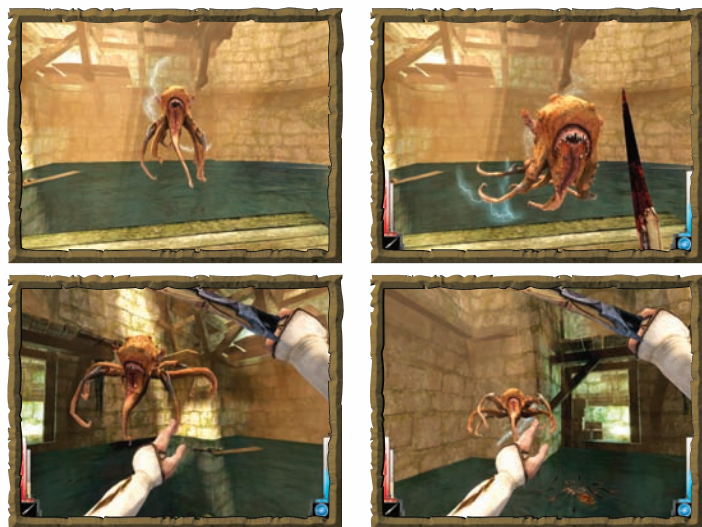
Vulnerability: Fire

Description: Infused with the magic of ancient times, this creature can be found only in the secluded ruins of long-forgotten Ashan locales. Facehuggers hunt in packs, stunning their prey with their electricity before tearing them apart with their sharp teeth.

How to Beat It: With no armor, facehuggers are like balloons that pop if you hit them really hard with a sharp object (arrow or



sword). Slide out of the way of its electricity while you return fire with arrows or fire. When it hovers near, swat at it by slashing back and forth quickly. This usually drops it out of the sky. You never find one alone, so circle-sprint to stop them from ganging up, and strike at the one you end up behind.



Ghoul

Creature Affiliation:

Undead

Strengths: Freeze spell, speedy, can walk on walls and ceilings

Weaknesses: No armor

Vulnerability: Holy

Description: A ghoul forms when a necromancer forces a soul to remain in a dead body, and they join neither the side of the living nor the dead. Filled with hatred for the living, ghouls can be controlled only by powerful necromancers who command them like puppets. Certain factions consider ghouls to be the ultimate punishment because they are removed from the cycle of rebirth.

How to Beat It: Expect a ghoul to come from any



direction—it can drop off ceilings, run down walls, pop out of alleys. You have to be ready and always on the move. Forget poison weapons because it's immune. Keep out of the reach of its Freeze touch or you'll suck up damage while you play sitting duck. Try not to lunge at it, because an unsuccessful stab puts you in range of a bad bite or Freeze touch. A staff works wonders and the sword/shield combination gives you enough defense to counterattack with a vengeance.



Giant Worm

Creature Affiliation: Unaligned
Strengths: Armor, huge size
Weaknesses: Limited mobility
Vulnerability: None

Description: Giant worms can swallow a man whole and come back for seconds. They're tall enough to shatter whole buildings when they thrash around, so humans and other like-sized creatures should clear out of the area rather than risk a squashing. An angry worm proves a relentless challenge.

How to Beat It: Its sheer size makes a swordfight out of the question. You can't really go toe-to-teeth with an armored



foe 100 times your size. Find a place to hide when the giant worm spreads its mouth wide and dives in your direction. An obstacle between you and the worm's maw can keep you intact. It's best to flee from the worm at top speed. A Fireball into its gullet may cause more than heartburn.



Goblin

Creature Affiliation: Orc
Strengths: Ambushes, group combat
Weaknesses: Cowardly, small, and weak
Vulnerability: Lightning

Description: Where orcs are noble and stalwart, goblins are sneaky, devious, and stupid. They share the same lands as the orcs, but goblins can't hold the important posts because of their self-destructive tendencies. They rarely attack in less than a mob and love to scavenge from their kills or any corpse they stumble upon.



How to Beat It: A goblin will never challenge you one on one unless it sees an advantage. It might, however, throw rocks at your skull or sneak around to stab you in the back. A goblin will flee when it's wounded and call for help from goblins nearby. They go down easily, though, so pursue them aggressively. Daggers perform well because you can deal damage quickly and it doesn't take much to bring them down. Plus, when one flees, you automatically throw your dagger into its back for the kill.



How to Beat It: Think of a lich as a non-weapon version of yourself. It will not swing a sword at you, but it will spray you with spells such as Lightning Bolt and Inferno, and it can heal itself back to full if you give it time. In close, you can strike a lich repeatedly to break its concentration and disrupt spells. A fatality will sever its undead energies from its animated body, and you can take advantage of its slow levitation movement by circling behind or running for cover before it spots you again.



Lich

Creature Affiliation: Undead
Strengths: Spell caster, ranged attack
Weaknesses: Slow
Vulnerability: Holy

Description: The lich is the state between necromancer and vampire in the undead hierarchy. They serve the Spider Goddess faithfully, and necromancers serve them like ghouls serve the necromancers. Their desiccated bodies can hold a surprising amount of magical energy, which they channel into potent spells and dark rituals that pollute and destroy the world of the living.



Necromancer

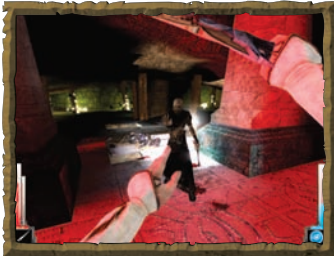
Creature Affiliation: Undead
Strengths: Spell casting, summoning, ranged attack
Weaknesses: Weak in melee combat
Vulnerability: Holy

Description: To engage in the black arts, necromancers split from the Wizards of the Silver Cities during a great civil war. They study death magic to become immortal and also control the spirits of the deceased or raise them from their graves. The farther they move from humanity, the more power they have over the undead and the creatures of the night. Necro Lords are the most powerful necromancer wizards.



Also, necromancer lords are more powerful than regular necromancers. Necromancer lords are tougher (Health and damage) and have the ability to summon undead to heal, and resurrect fallen black guards.

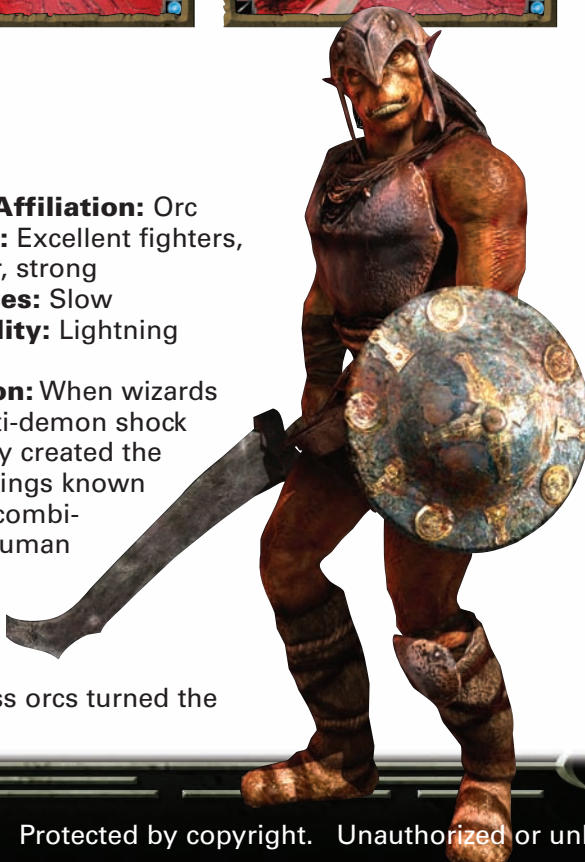
How to Beat It: A necromancer usually casts one of three spells: Flame Arrow, Freeze, or Summon Zombie (only from Necro Lords). Dodge its Flame Arrows and avoid its touch so you won't turn into an icicle. If a zombie pops up, go after the necromancer; you don't want it casting more summons to fill the area with undead. Close on a necromancer to force it to switch to its hook and give up its spells; at that point, you have the fight won.



Orc

Creature Affiliation: Orc
Strengths: Excellent fighters, light armor, strong
Weaknesses: Slow
Vulnerability: Lightning

Description: When wizards needed anti-demon shock troops, they created the artificial beings known as orcs. A combination of human flesh and demon blood, the strong and ruthless orcs turned the



tide in the Second Demon War and won it for their masters. Rather than be repaid with kindness and gratitude, the orcs were persecuted and feared, and eventually enslaved. They grew bitter toward their creators and regained their freedom through a series of bloody uprisings.

How to Beat It: An orc is a challenging foe in close combat. It is stronger than a black guard—don't get into a parry contest with one of them or you could end up thrown backward—and deals more damage per hit. Luckily, it recovers from combat swings slowly and you can counterattack to the open side fairly often. Use your kick to repel a troublesome orc, especially if you face more than one. In tight, watch that they don't grab you by the neck and throttle you for extra damage.



Pao Kai



Strengths: Flyer, ranged lightning attack, large
Weaknesses: Weak dodge ability
Vulnerability: Fire, Poison

Description: These ancient predators roam the barren recesses of Ashan in search of prey they can stun with their electrical attack then swoop down and steal. Some of these dragons have been tamed by orc tribes to aid them on hunting raids, but most pao kai hang around orc camps looking for convenient and accessible food. Many of these dragons move quickly for their size.

How to Beat It: Give up your sword. The only chance you'll have to slash at a pao kai is when it drops down close enough to rake you with its claws, and that's not a good thing. You're better off plucking away at it with poison arrows and ranged spells such as Flame Arrows and Fireballs (but not Lightning Bolt because it casts electricity itself!). Of course, if you can trick it into sticking its neck under a portcullis and then slam the pointy bars down on the beast, that works too.

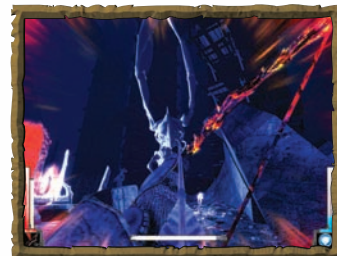
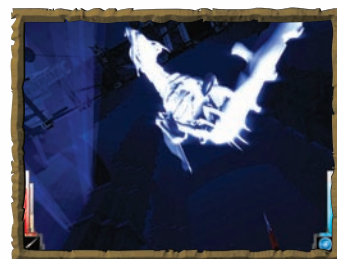


Bone Dragon

Creature Affiliation: Undead
Strengths: Teleportation, thick hide
Weaknesses: Bound to Arantir's life
Vulnerability: No particular vulnerability

Description: This undead dragon creation protects Arantir in his greatest times of need. It really has no will of its own, other than to serve the Vampire Lord and destroy anything that stands in the way of the purposes of the necromancers. Its undead form should not be considered weaker than other dragons such as the pao kai—its powers of teleportation can instantly displace it to any spot in the sky, making it a difficult threat to spot and attack.

How to Beat It: As with the pao kai, deal with it at range. Head for cover that you can duck behind when a lightning blast rains down from the specter's mouth, then slide out and fire from when you have a free shot. When the bone dragon teleports, sprint away from your current position to another cover spot a few seconds away. Most of the time the bone dragon teleports directly behind you for a sneak attack. Keep picking away at it, but remember that its master is the true source of the creature's power.



Spider

Creature Affiliation: Dungeon dweller
Strengths: Fast, poisonous attack, can walk on walls and ceilings
Weaknesses: Deaf, small (except for the giant variety)
Vulnerability: Fire

Description: Sacred to the necromancers, these creatures thrive in territories under undead control. Ranging from small to large to giant, spiders crawl



around in the darkest dungeon holes and spring at unsuspecting adventurers when they least expect it. Their poisonous bite causes disorientation and can lead to death if not treated immediately with an antidote potion.

How to Beat It: Never stay in front of a spider for long. It springs at you, ready to inject poison if it lands anywhere on your body. Against the most common variety, the large spider, circle it and strike rapidly with weapon slashes. Small spiders can be squashed with one kick or a stab from a reliable weapon. In the case of the giant spider, it's going to take a lot more whacks and you must gain enough adrenaline to rupture it with a fatality to the underbelly.



Zombie

Creature Affiliation: Undead

Strengths: Poisonous gas, resurrection, immune to Poison and Life Drain

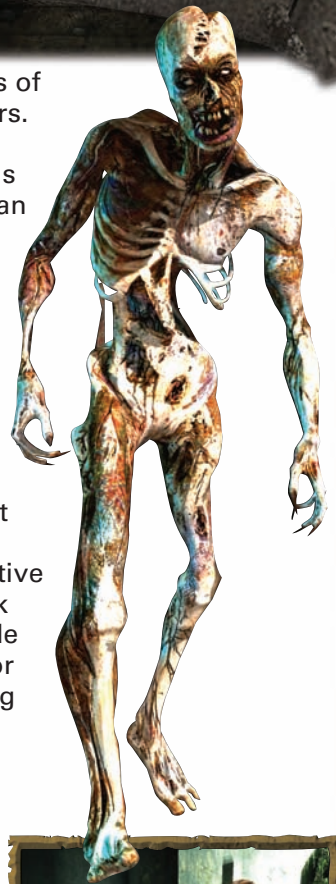
Weaknesses: Slow

Vulnerability: Holy

Description: Soulless and mindless bodies reanimated by death magic, zombies shamble about following the orders of even the lowliest necromancer. They can lie dormant as buried corpses, then awaken when a living being approaches. In this capacity, zombies guard important necromancer sites; they can

also appear at the summons of more powerful necromancers.

How to Beat It: A zombie is like a target dummy—you can keep thwacking it, but it won't stay down. Because of a zombie's special resurrection ability, you must impale a zombie to finish it off—or do a massive amount of damage from subsequent attacks or one fatality—otherwise the creature rises back to its feet and continues its pursuit. To prevent damage from an active zombie, dodge its first attack and move to its exposed side where you can launch two or three blows before preparing to move again.



Prologue

Chapter Objectives

- Obtain a Spider Key.
- Find the Shantiri Crystal.
- Defeat the black guards and advance to the next chamber (1 skill point).

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Spider Key	First Room	Atop stone altar
Short Sword	Ruined Crypt	Inside wooden chest
Shantiri Crystal	Crystal Room	Past the last spider door

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Zombies	Holy	Sarcophagus Room
Black Guards	Fire	Guard Room



Note

Weapon of Choice

Short Sword: It's the only weapon for the Prologue, so use it well.



Note

Spell of Choice

Dark Vision: Use this to see in the dark in some unlit spots in order to navigate successfully through to the next torch.



Key First Steps



Phenrig sends you to feel your way through your first dungeon and find the Shantiri Crystal.

Your lord and mentor for most of your life up to this point has been Master Phenrig. This is your big chance to go out into the world and carry out an important mission, but first you have to hone your skills. He doesn't want you dying before you can fulfill your destiny, after all.



Turn left at the statue to find the Spider Key on the stone altar.

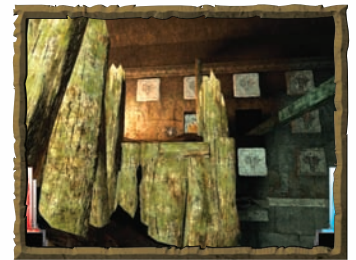
Phenrig leads you to a dark and dank dungeon to practice for adventures in your near future. Your first objective is to obtain the Spider Key, which unlocks the various stone doors sealed with spider emblems. Luckily, the Spider Key isn't far. Head down the starting corridor and hang a left at the big statue at the end.



The Spider Key opens the far door to a new chamber.

Prologue

You see the Spider Key on the stone altar in the center of the room. It may look like an ominous room, but the altar isn't trapped, so you can pick up the key without fear. Use it on the door behind the altar and enter the next area.



Climb up the chain and hop up the short embankment to keep going.

Jump at the chain, and if you land on the chain in the middle of your screen, you automatically grab it. Climb up the chain and leap off once you're a few feet above the stones on the higher landing. A small embankment holds a gap in the wooden fence that surrounds the area. Heave yourself up over this embankment and into the next area.

Caution
If you leap off a rope or chain when you're parallel with a higher surface, you may fall. Climb a few feet higher than you think to ensure a safe landing.



Pull the lever and outrace the closing portcullis.

The corridor after the key's room tests your run speed. Pull the lever on the left wall and sprint to the end of the corridor. A portcullis at the far end slams shut after several seconds, and unless you put on a burst of speed, you won't make it through. If you miss, go back and pull the lever again for another try. This is the tutorial, so it's all about practicing your skills.



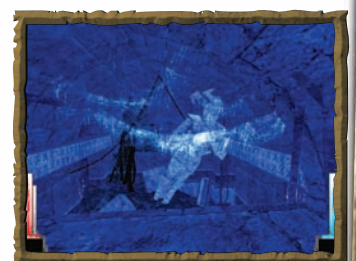
Toss the boxes out of your way.

If you look to your left, you'll see three boxes in front of a planked-off tunnel. Grab each box one by one and toss it over the fence. Once you can see the planks, level a strong kick to smash through the wood, and you can now crawl through the short tunnel.



Kick the support plank to break the platform and release a chain to the next level.

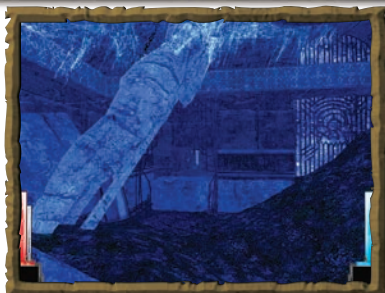
On the other side of the portcullis, the room slopes down to a polluted pool. You don't want to go swimming in that nasty stuff. Instead, kick at the support plank holding up the wooden platform above the water. The whole platform topples and releases a chain that winds up to an opening in the ceiling.



Use your Dark Vision spell to crouch and find the hidden exit.

It's time for your beginning spell, Dark Vision. Click on it to cast a bluish tinge on the once-black area.

It's like wearing night-vision goggles—you can see almost as well as normal sight, maybe even better in places with heavy shadows, because Dark Vision lessens those shadow effects. Using Dark Vision, drop into the dark room and climb to the hidden passage on the right-hand wall.



Test of Combat



A wooden chest holds your very first weapon—a short sword.

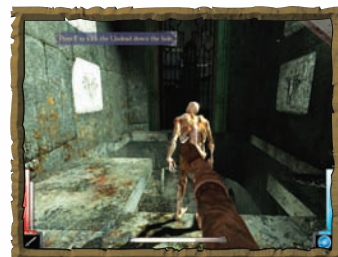
The hidden crawlspace drops you into the ruined crypt. Jog up the slope to the wooden chest at the top and open it. Inside you'll find a short sword, which becomes a precious commodity inside the dungeon. You have some fighting ahead, and because this is your only weapon, you need to master its slices and stabs.



Cut the rope to cause a big bang with the swinging sarcophagus.



Sword in hand, look back on the wall and cut the rope holding the chained sarcophagus in place. This releases the big stone coffin like a battering ram, and it punches a hole in the wall for you to reach the next chamber.



Approach the undead zombie from behind and give him a swift kick.

Your first monster, a lone zombie, stands in front of a hole leading down to the next level. The zombie isn't especially perceptive, so you can sneak up on him and kick him down the shaft.



Finish off the zombie by impaling it.

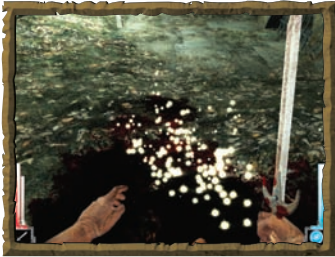
Zombies may be slow—both in mind and step—but they are tough to keep down. If you don't impale it, or finish it off with a fatality, a zombie will rise back up to its feet and pick up where it left off. Drop down next to the zombie you kicked down the hole, hold the attack button on your sword as you step over it, then release for an impale move that will skewer the zombie dead.



Another zombie rises from the grave to gnaw your face off.

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The zombie's partner rises from the earth and attacks you soon after. You have to whack him four times to build up enough adrenaline to reach the fatality threshold. Now swing at him and you'll instant-kill the poor zombie.



You can be sure a zombie is gone only when you see it vanish in a flash of sparkles or you sever it with a fatality move.

Remember to watch for those special zombie sparkles when they die. Don't be fooled by a zombie lying on the ground. It is still "alive."



Remove the first black guard with a surprise kick.

Follow the exit to the next area, the guard room, where most of your fighting for this chapter will take place. Five black guards inhabit the area. The first one stands guard with his back to you when you enter through the pillars. A strong kick will send him sprawling and probably break his neck when he lands, or at least injure him enough to be easy pickings later.



More guards will rush you, so be on the lookout.

Unfortunately, you aren't stealthy enough to fool the other guards. As soon as the first guard falls, another guard rushes out from one of the two passages on the lower level. Three more guards follow in short order.



Impale the black guards on the spiked column.

Practice your sword fighting with some well-timed slashes, stabs, dodges, and parries. It's crucial to build up your combat skills here, before you face foes that will cut an inexperienced player to ribbons.

That doesn't mean you should forget about tricks. The easiest trick to accomplish is to use a sequence of sword blows to kick or back your target into the spikes lining the lower-level central pillar. It's a one-shot kill.



Barbecue another guard on a fire pit.

You can also lure an unsuspecting guard close to one of the fire pits. Again, a kick can catapult the guard into the deadly flames, or you can back him in as he retreats from your sword strikes. The fire burns up your enemy in a few seconds—just back up so you don't catch on fire yourself.

You can always build up adrenaline to take out a black guard with a single fatality move.

To finish off the combat in style, put away your sword and rely on the other obstacles in the room to punish the necro

guards. Catch a guard near one of the shelves and you can break the shelf with a kick (or a sword swing) and crash barrels down on his head. If that doesn't finish him, pick up a crate and heave it at his skull.

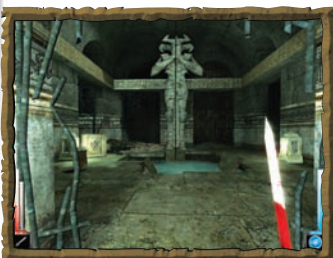




Don't forget to use the obstacles in the room to your advantage.



Gaining the Crystal



You earn your first skill point after you leave the guard room.



Once you've dealt with the black guards, leave the guard room through the raised portcullis and enter the new area. As soon as you do, you earn your first skill point.

Now you have a difficult decision. With one skill point, you can buy a lot of low-level skills—all useful. You may already know the type of character you want to play, so go ahead and pick up the appropriate skill. If you want to go mage, Flame Arrow or Telekinesis sound about right. An archer will want one point in Archery, though this path is slow to develop because you won't find a chance to fire many arrows early in the game. Stamina gives you greater distance on your run and a little more oomph to your combat moves—not a bad choice at all.

However, the two best choices are Alertness or Melee Combat. Alertness allows you to see traps and detect secret passages. Avoiding trap damage and finding secret loot go a long way. Your other choice works for almost all character configurations. Melee Combat enables the Flurry of Blows skill (an unlimited series of fast strikes) and Charge (a powerful running attack to stun your enemies). More importantly, it sets you up for future combat skills and allows you to use more hand weapons. No matter your skill preference, you need to wield better weapons as you proceed.



Collect the two healing potions from the dragon-marked crate.



Tip

You can choose to not choose. You don't have to spend your skill point immediately, if you can't decide on a path or want to save up for something more expensive.

The chain next to the dragon crate brings you to the final level.

After you spend (or don't spend) your skill point, crack open the dragon crate at your feet. All dragon crates contain useful items, usually health and mana potions. This one holds two health potions; each restores 10 life. With potions tucked safely away in your inventory, grab the chain above the water and climb up to the last level.



The last spider door opens to the crystal chamber.

There's not much left to do but walk to the last spider door and stick in the key. The door opens into the crystal chamber, where you gain the powerful Shantiri Crystal. This crystal begins your true quest and sends you on a journey that will forever change your life—for better or worse.

At last, the Shantiri Crystal is in your grasp.



The Gates of Stonehelm

Chapter Objectives

- Find Menelag and deliver the Shantiri Crystal to him.
- Escape from the ghouls.
- Find a way to get up over the ramparts.
- Pull the lever to prevent the ghouls from getting in.
- Take control of the ballista.
- Shoot the cyclops to stun it.
- The guard must survive.

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Bow	Third guard post	On the table by window
Short Sword	First guard post	Hanging on wall by main guard
Wooden Staff	Third guard post	Resting on wall next to guard looking out at city
Daggers	Stairs below third guard post	Inside unlocked wooden chest
Scroll of Freeze	Middle house in city	On the table by the bed
Full Health Potion	Hidden attic window and inside attic	Past roofer, through dragon crate

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Undead Cyclops	Holy	Main Courtyard
Ghouls	Holy	Main Courtyard
Ghouls	Holy	Castle walls



Note

Weapon of Choice

Bow: It's your first chance to use a ranged weapon, though most of this chapter will be beaten by your wits.



Welcome to Stonehelm—Now Grab a Sword!



Phenrig conjures the spirit guide Xana to possess you.

Before you set out on your quest, Master Phenrig decides to give you a little help. He conjures the demon spirit guide Xana to "bond" with you—possess you—and serve you on your travels. Xana tempts you to the dark side with mischievous or rude suggestions from time to time—ignore them if you want to stay out of trouble—but she also gives you hints at times when you could get stuck. Listen to her practical comments and try to tune out her thoughts of jealousy and petty arrogance.



Note

Spell of Choice

Heal: The crucial spell on the defensive wizard path helps you stay alive as you dodge the evil creatures running around Stonehelm.





All looks fine at first when you approach Stonehelm.

A short horse ride brings you to Stonehelm's main gates. You have an official parchment from Phenrig to Lord Menalag, so there's no trouble getting in. The trouble comes when a band of ghouls and an undead cyclops launch an offensive on the city.



As you show the guards your official document, an attack ruptures the stone blocks above the gate.

The attack's first wave smashes loose the stone blocks along the rooftop, which come cascading down around you. Don't panic. You'll take some damage from the debris; however, the guards are there for your protection and will drag you to safety inside the main gates. The last glimpse outside reveals several ghouls hunting Stonehelm citizens and a rather large undead cyclops closing in on the gates.



Ghouls and an undead cyclops invade the gates, but the guards manage to drag you to safety—for now.



Inside, the guards bar the smaller side gate and let you loose. You are now free to act on your own. Once you walk out the entranceway into the main courtyard, the action really begins.



An undead cyclops busts through the gate to terrorize you and the locals.

The undead cyclops breaks apart the main gates with a mighty crash. The thing is massive and you have no real weapons to fight it. Plus, ghouls swarm the courtyard as well. If you stand still, the creatures will overwhelm you and it's lights out.



Dodge the ghouls and head for the hanging chain on the far end of the courtyard.

Your only chance is to run for it. Sprint away from the main gate and turn right into the side section of the courtyard. At the far end, spot a chain hanging down from a barn's wooden rafters. Leap onto the chain and haul yourself up and away from the deadly monsters.



Should the monsters take a huge chunk out of your life in the main courtyard and you can't reach the exit chain in time, cast Heal while running away from them. With the extra life, you should be able to escape.

The Gates of Stonehelm



A successful climb brings you to the upper level and temporary safety.

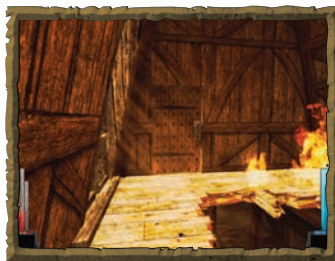


Pull yourself up to the small open window. A townspeople gestures to you inside. Jump from the chain onto the short ledge and then duck inside. As long as you continue moving through the building, you won't have to worry about melee combat with the ghouls or undead cyclops in this chapter.

All Along the Watchtower



Keep moving through the house to avoid the pursuing ghoul.



As you gather your wits inside the barn, take comfort that you don't have to do much thinking here—there is only one way to proceed forward through the house. Run up the stairs near the window you dropped in through and across the upper platform. Wind up the stairs and carefully traverse the wooden plank that leads you up to a landing on fire. Open the door on that landing and climb up the ladder by the haystack.



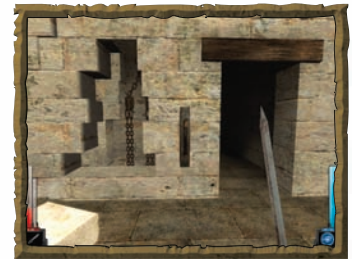
A ghoul eats the townspeople before you can swing to the safety of the castle wall rooftop.



Another townspeople waits for you at the exit across some rafters. Unfortunately, ghouls can crawl on any surface, and one of them climbs up the wall and leaps off the nearby roof to munch on his head. This does, however, preoccupy the ghoul long enough for you to run at a rope hanging between the barn and the castle wall across the street. Get a good jump at the end of the wooden planks and grab the rope squarely so that you can swing across to the stone rooftop on the other side.



Save the guard by pulling the lever and preventing more ghouls from joining the party.



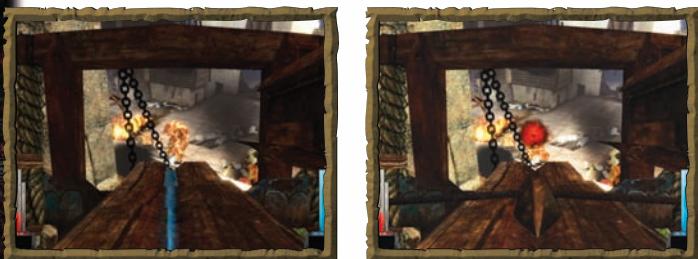
When you land, the nearby guard needs to defend the rooftop. You'll see him fighting a ghoul by the roof entrance. Pull the lever to the left of the doorway, which drops a small portcullis and seals the way against more ghouls. The guard kills the ghoul himself, though he can't walk afterward, so he asks you to go on without him. You also gain one more skill point here, so fill in your skills or save up for a bigger skill later.

There's also a health potion and a full health potion near the fireplace.



The unlocked door at the first guard post leads to the ballista.

When you're ready, cross the first guard post to the opposite side and head up the stairs behind the unlocked door. A second guard will fetch you if you take too long. You'll arrive in the ballista room, with the big, mounted crossbow in the archway directly ahead.



Fire ballista bolts at the cyclops's head before he can lower the drawbridge.

Operate the ballista and aim down into the courtyard below. You spot the cyclops attacking the drawbridge. If he lowers the bridge, more ghouls swarm the castle and overrun the defenses. You have to stun the big brute before that happens.

The last shot brings the cyclops to its knees.

The ballista automatically reloads, so just point and fire. Aim for the cyclops's head to inflict maximum damage on his vulnerable eye. Keep the pressure on the giant monster, even if you miss with a few bolts. After several hits, you should distract the brute away from the drawbridge and then bring him to his knees in the center of the courtyard, where a Stonehelm guard finishes him off.



Grab some food rations before heading to the second guard room.

In the ballista room, you can entertain yourself with the diary entry from Garth the guard. He

professes his love for Leanna, even though you know he doesn't have a prayer of wooing her. Be sure to pick up the bread and food rations on the guard tables before heading to the second guard room.

Follow the stairs down to the next guard post. The dragon crate holds a health potion (and a food ration rests on top of it), and a Bestiary of Ashan rests on the table telling about creatures of the land. Crank the wheel by the portcullis to raise the bars and leave the second guard post.



Add the wooden staff to your arsenal in the third guard room.

The long, dark corridor leads to the better lit third guard post. There's not much of interest here, other than the wooden staff leaning against the wall by the window and the bow on the table. Take the staff so you have flexibility in the melee weapon you choose against certain foes and the bow for ranged attacks later on.



Pick up a shield and a pair of daggers before leaving the guard posts on the wall.

Down the stairs from the third guard post you'll find a discarded shield and a wooden chest. Open the chest for a pair of regular daggers (another combat option) and hold onto the shield for later. In the dragon crate by the stairs, pick up another food ration. You can't use the shield until you upgrade your Melee Combat skill to the second level.

Finding Leanna



Inside the city proper you'll see lots of guards and townsfolk wandering about.

After your adventures with the guards, you can rest easy once you descend the stairs to the streets of Stonehelm. No monsters jump out to haunt your every step; you only have to rendezvous with Menelag's niece and mage-in-training, Leanna.



The barracks hosts lots of liquid refreshment and a pie.



The Stonehelm streets may seem like a maze at first, but you basically have three directions to go: left, straight-ahead, and right. Going left brings you to a passageway opposite the slumped towns person. The passageway leads down to an underground recreation area for the guards, equipped with an eatery, an archery range, and a kitchen. You can find 11 drinks near the archery range, a pie and bread in the kitchen, and bread and a food ration on the table out by the guards.



Search for dragon crates in the streets.



If you retrace your steps to the main intersection again and head straight this time, you'll pass a barrel shelf on your right and walk up stairs on the left. Your first right sends you down an alley that loops back around to the main intersection. Along the way you can find two dragon crates, each containing food rations.



The door past the barrels leads to some loot on the first and second floors.



If you don't take the alley and continue straight ahead, you'll enter a darkened overhang with a door on your left and the passage winding off to your right. The passage takes you up some stairs and eventually leads to the upper courtyard with Leanna. The door opens into a house with some nifty loot inside. On the first floor, peel the purple curtain away for a food ration inside the hidden dragon crate. Upstairs, the chest holds a health potion, the large wardrobe hides a mana potion, and on the table by the bed lies a discarded Scroll of Freeze. Check out the secret area triggered by the lamp on the wall.



Secure your first mana potion and Scroll of Freeze in the middle house.



Back in the main intersection near this area's starting door, head right to reach Leanna quickly. Wind past the buildings and along the path with the lady meditating in the leaves.



The shortest way to Leanna is right from the starting door and past the meditating lady.

Climb up the stairs and reach the upper courtyard. Don't walk over to Leanna yet—you have one more secret area to visit.

Look for the ladder at the corner that leads up to the roofer plying his trade. You can climb the ladder, slide by the roofer, and then walk up the wood planks to reach another roof.



A secret storage area lies above the street on the ledge by the roofer.

Open the first window on this roof and you can crawl inside to a secret storage area in the attic. Break open the dragon crate for a full health potion.



The dragon crate in the secret storage area holds a valuable full health potion.

Return to the courtyard. Now approach Leanna and trigger the end sequence. Leanna welcomes you and dismisses her guards so you can talk in private.



Leanna greets you and dismisses her immediate bodyguards.

Her uncle Menelag has been waiting for you and your cargo, the powerful Shantiri Crystal. She guides you deeper into the city and to Menelag's house as you chat.



Follow Leanna to Menelag's house.

At the house, you meet up with Menelag and share dinner with the two. Menelag would like you to accompany Leanna, who will head up an expedition in the morning to an isolated island that contains the Skull of Shadows deep in the bowels of the Temple of the Spider. Sounds ominous, but then you've been waiting for a chance to really strut your stuff, haven't you?



You finally meet Menelag and sit down to dinner with Leanna to discuss the quest for the Skull of Shadows.

The Gleam of a Cold Knife

Chapter Objectives

- Find the entrance to Menelag's mansion.
- Talk to the young lady in front of the gate.
- Follow Leanna.
- Find a way into Menelag's house.
- Find Menelag—he's probably in his bedroom.
- Follow the ghoul!
- Retrieve the Crystal!

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Stone Skin Potion	Main cellar room	Secret passage by tapestry, in dragon crate guarded by spiders
Full Health Potion	Main cellar room	Secret passage by tapestry, in chest guarded by trap
Wizard Robe	Main hall	Side room opposite entrance, resting on wardrobe
Ring of Arcane Brilliance	Fireplace secret passage	Use candelabra to open passage, ring inside chest
Fireball Scroll	Fireplace secret passage	Use candelabra to open passage, scroll inside chest
Full Health Potion	Fireplace secret passage	Use candelabra to open passage, potion inside chest
Old Key	Tower stairwell	Resting on floor at the top of the stairwell

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Black Guards	Fire	Outer Courtyard
Black Guards	Fire	Garden
Black Guards	Fire	Cellar
Spiders	Fire	Cellar
Black Guards	Fire	House Rooms
Black Guards	Fire	Tower
Necromancer	Holy	Menelag's Chamber
Ghoul	Holy	Menelag's Chamber



Note

Weapon of Choice

Wooden Staff: The big fights in and around Menelag's house involve multiple opponents, and the staff can keep them at bay while driving them to their knees.



Note

Spell of Choice

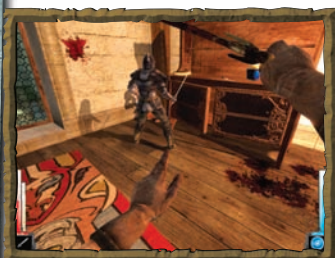
Charm: Turn the odds in your favor, or at least even, as you enslave guards to fight with you against their friends.

Raid in the Night



A servant wakes you to warn of an attack by the necromancers and their guards.

Your last night's rest before the big day doesn't go so well. In the middle of the night, a servant boy rushes into your room to shake you awake and tell you that necromancers have stormed the property. You barely get to your feet when a black guard charges up the stairs and ends the boy's life, unless you stop him.



Despite your best efforts, the black guard manages to kill the servant boy.

Whack the black guard a few times and try not to get caught in the same corner as the boy. The guard concentrates on the servant, so get in a few wounds while the guard's attention is elsewhere and then whack him one final time when he turns to confront you. Grab the black guard's short sword so you have another weapon.



Retrieve some goodies before exiting your guest house.

A dagger (which you probably already own) and a mana potion rest on the nearby cabinet, along with a special book—the Bestiary of Ashan. It gives you some insight into the world's monsters: spiders are vulnerable to fire, orcs and goblins are resistant to fire but vulnerable to lightning, while the undead creatures are resistant to everything except holy damage. Pick up the extra food ration in the bottom drawer of the cabinet, as well as the one on the large shelves downstairs. If you need a wooden staff, grab the one against the wall.



Sneak up on the first black guard in the outer courtyard and kick out the shelf to crush him under the weight of boxes and barrels.



The door on the first floor leads to the outer courtyard. One guard stands watch in the street under a large shelf of barrels and boxes. Two more talk near the fire, with the rest patrolling the outskirts. Look to your left to see a closed portcullis with a dragon crate behind it. Your goal, the cellar entrance, lies beyond that portcullis, except you have to take the long way around.



Tip

Remember your weapons: Daggers can backstab if you have the time, the sword deals the most damage, and the staff can ward off large groups.

Quietly sneak up on the first guard. It helps if you have Stealth 1, because he won't hear your approach or have any warning. Kick out the shelf support and let the barrels and boxes do the rest. If he's still moving, perform a power strike move and impale him.

The Gleam of a Cold Knife



Use blade or flame to vanquish more enemies.



As long as you don't run around the courtyard like a madman, you should only have, at most, two guards on you at once. If a group surrounds you, switch to your staff—it has a wider arc to drive foes backward and it stuns more effectively than the sword, giving you valuable seconds to reposition yourself in heated combat.



Maneuver around the courtyard until you can throw a box or two at the guards.



Work whatever tricks you can to take down the black guards: perhaps a couple of swings to bring up your adrenaline and launch a fatality, bashing a foe into the fire, stunning enemies with crates—you have plenty of options in this courtyard. If you hustle while the two guards are near the fire, you can turn the nearby crank and release the crane. The chained box swings and levels anyone in its path.



Release the old-fashioned crane and its chained box bashes your foes.



When the dust has settled and you don't hear any more gruff voices in the courtyard, comb the area for loot. Smash open the dragon crates for a health potion and a mana potion.

Loot the courtyard before moving on.



On the far side of the courtyard, head around the bend and then peek around the corner to spot a lone guard on patrol. He stands near or under an overhang, which you can kick out (or bash in) to drop the whole thing on his head. It beats slugging it out and risking damage to yourself.



Rely on the old "break the shelf" trick to take out another guard.

The corridor eventually opens into the garden area. The dragon crate near the entrance holds a health potion, quiver of arrows, and a mana potion. If you stay hidden by the pillars, you can look out across the garden and spot the first guard. One arrow to the head removes him without a sound. Even if you only wound him, part of your work is done when you run over there.



From the garden entrance, draw a bead on the closest guard with your bow.

Whether you kill the first guard or not, rush over to that spot and draw your sword. Another guard patrols in the far corner, so you may have to deal with him before finishing off the wounded guard. If you've upgraded your skills to Melee Combat 2, arm yourself with the shield you took earlier from the Stonehelm guard post. Now you can attack

and defend more easily when you have threats coming at you from any direction.



Finish off the guards near the pool with your trusty sword.

A third guard arrives to support the first two. To try a fun trick, maneuver the guard near the pool and send him backward with a kick to the stomach. The guard topples into the pool, where he'll either drown or lie stunned while you end his misery.



You can even stun one with a kick into the pool.

The tunnel exiting the garden eventually leads to the cellar entrance. Follow the stone runway up past the locked door and back around to the upper level. Around the next corner, you'll see a closed portcullis (the same one that blocked your path earlier in the outer courtyard). Before you use the cellar entrance, open the dragon crate for an extra health potion and mana potion.



Follow the tunnel to the cellar entrance.

From Cellar to Tower

The door at the base of the cellar stairs leads into a side storage room.



You gain one skill point for entering the cellar, which may give you the exact upgrade you want at this point. You have a lot of fighting ahead, so you probably want to sink your skill points in to something combat-oriented such as Endurance 1, or even Stealth 1 and 2, and probably not into something like Poison Resistance.



A single guard patrols the side room, but he's not much of an issue with your combat skills getting better and better.

At the bottom of the cellar stairs, you have two choices: the door nearest the stairs or the passageway. Start with the door; it leads into a small side chamber with a dragon crate that has an antidote potion and food rations inside. A single guard patrols this area; watch that he doesn't sneak up behind you.



Roam the cellar corridors quietly until you spy the guard at the corner post.



The Gleam of a Cold Knife

After you clean out the side room, head toward the passageway. Off to your left, you spot a dark alcove that looks like a closet. Look carefully on the top shelf to find a mana potion and a bottle of berry juice. Load up and move down the passageway, peeking around each corner silently.

At the second corner, draw your bow and aim at the black guard posted at the far corner. A headshot will finish him; if you miss or graze him, sprint down the corridor to slay him with your sword before he can warn the others.



Dispatch the black guards in the wine cellar with a few nasty tricks.



The corner guard has two friends in the wine cellar adjacent to his post. His death rattle might have put them on alert, so charge through the archway with your weapon ready. Use the usual tricks—kicks, throwing debris, breaking shelves—to squash them. You can even impale them on the spikes on the center column.



A hidden stone reveals a secret passage in the cellar.

After combat, search the wine cellar thoroughly. Find two mana potions in the dragon crate next to the spiked column. There's also a health potion in the cubby next to the initial entrance. Best of all, a secret brick in the floor (far corner opposite the entrance) opens a passage in the middle portion of the wall.



Spiders and a trap safeguard the secret chest.



The secret compartment inside holds some nasty surprises. First off, some spiders slink around the gloom and will bite you if you don't swat them aside. Second, a trap underneath the stone platform in front of the chest will trigger blasts of fire if you stand on it near the chest. Step to the side of the chest, off the stone, and retrieve the full health potion without setting off the trap. Don't forget the stone skin potion, antidote potion, and health potion in the dragon crates either.



The portcullis opens to a staircase ascending to the small kitchen area.



Flip the lever to raise the portcullis when you're ready to leave the wine cellar. The stairs next to the dead woman lead up to a small kitchen area with two guards. If you've spent your points on the defensive spell side, upgrade to Charm to use against the black guards. Cast Charm on the nearest guard and suddenly the odds have shifted to two-on-one *against* the enemy. Once his partner goes down, hack away at the Charmed guard.



Tangle the guards up with a kick or pit them against each other with your Charm spell.

Stock up with the food on the pantry shelves, mana potion on the bench, quiver of arrows on the cabinet, food ration on the floor, mushrooms in the dragon crate, fish and leek on the large shelves, and ribs by the fireplace. Take this time to rest and gobble down some food if you aren't at full health.



Restock your food rations in the kitchen area.

Take the stairs in the corner to the next door. It opens into a room with a balcony above. Two black guards on the ground floor have murdered everyone. Don't feel any remorse as you slice up the swordsman on the rug and the archer in the shadows under the balcony. The archer on the balcony will probably have to wait until you reach the top level to take a good shot at you. A health potion, a mana potion, and a pie await in the wardrobe hidden behind the purple curtains.



Make the two black guards pay for the atrocities in the next room.



Exit the room through the unlocked door near the purple curtains and enter the main hall. Watch for a ghoul who climbs up the far wall near the red tapestry. Of course, you have bigger worries as the hall's black guards assail you.



You spot a ghoul climbing the main hall's wall, but concentrate on the black guards breathing down your neck.

Switch out whatever weapon you are using for the staff. Sweep at the guards as they approach and keep them away. Your reach with the staff is longer than theirs with swords; as long as you maintain staff's length, they can't hit you.



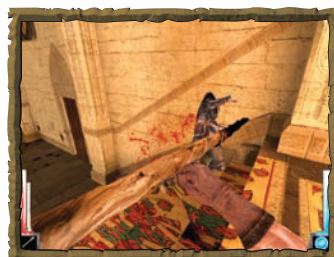
Tip

Strike an opponent hard in the head with your staff to stun him for several seconds.



The staff defends well against the large group of guards and can still skewer a stunned foe.

Bash away with the staff and constantly stay on the move so the guards don't pin you into a corner or against a wall. Use the stairs to your benefit. From above, it's easier to kick them down the stairs or swat at them with your staff.



Wipe the floor with the last lower-level enemy, then cut the rope near the stairs to the upper level.

The Gleam of a Cold Knife

Once you have cleared the lower area, race up the left stairs and cut the rope tied to the column near the top step. The severed rope releases a swinging chandelier, which should decimate at least one guard or give you an added obstacle to incorporate into your defense.

**The swinging chandelier
downs one victim.**

When you can move without a sword slicing at your ear, pick up the mana potion on the side table, the health potion in the chest, and a second health potion by the side of the smaller stone steps at the back of the room. The Bow of the Disciple (Collector's Edition) also rests on the stone steps, and its +5 damage can help your ranged attacks if you have Archery 2.



A scroll, a potion, and the all-important Ring of Arcane Brilliance lie hidden in the fireplace chest.

A chest inside holds four powerful items: two Scrolls of Fireball, a full health potion, and a Ring of Arcane Brilliance. Activate the ring immediately by double-clicking on it in your inventory.



Tip

The Ring of Arcane Brilliance will add another 10 mana to your total.



Enter the side room and put on the Arcane Robe.

Now double back to the side room off the first level of the main hall (opposite the entrance door). At last, you have some armor! Don the Wizard Robe folded on the shelf next to the fireplace, if you have the Magic Affinity 1 skill. It gives you +1 armor class and 10 extra mana. The chest on the opposite wall holds another mana potion.

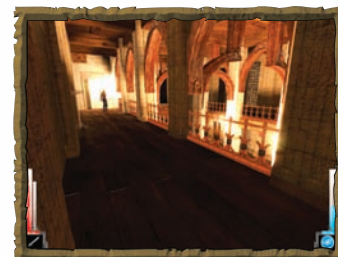


The strange candelabra reveals a secret treasure room.

Next, pick up the strange candelabra and move it from the left corner to the right corner of the fireplace (it shows up just like a key). A secret passage opens in the mouth of the fireplace.



From the cover of the shadows, remove the guard on the upper balcony.



Return to the upper level of the main hall. The side door leads to the upper balcony level where the archer from the previous room patrols. Surprise him with an arrow of your own, or rush him with a sudden sword point.



Fire off another Charm spell to help you in the library.

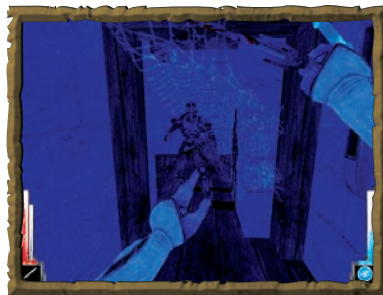


Climb the stairs to the top. You find a note from Menelag about the sad state of cleaning in the place, a quiver of arrows, and an Old Key that helps unlock one of the doors ahead.

Retreat to the first door when you're finished with the area. Inside, two guards patrol the library. Fire up one of your Charm spells to put the whammy on a black guard. With your new ally, you can restore silence to the library in no time. Use the rope in the library to go behind the bookshelves in the corner and grab some more pickups.



The library lever drops a rope that allows you to access the rafters and throw a rear attack at the first tower guard.



Pull the lever on the wall near the library door and climb the rope that falls from the rafters. Quietly cross the rafters and look for a side passage on your right. Pull another lever, which opens a secret passage, and you can sneak attack the lone guard that patrols in the corridor beyond.



Another hidden passage leads to a chest up in the rafters.



A landing off to your right has a small wooden panel on the left wall. Open the panel and you can crawl out onto the



rafters to a small platform. Two mana potions sit in the chest out there.



Subdue the rooftop guard by kicking him from his perch.

Return to the room with the secret passage and open the door on your right. At the top of the ladder, ease out onto the roof and come up from behind on the roof guard. Either kick him off the edge or slice and dice. If you have the Old Key, open the door by the roof guard and climb up to the dead-end tower room. Inside is a chest with a full health potion, a Scroll of Charm, and a Scroll of Weakening.



Menelag's Final Stand



Cross the tiny ledge to jump down onto the adjacent rooftop.

It seems like there is no way off the roof. You have fencing on one side and a locked door on the other. But if you look carefully, you can see a tiny ledge that runs from the middle straight out perpendicular to the rooftop you're standing on. Cross by one peaked window and then you can jump down to a lower roof on the far side.

The Gleam of a Cold Knife



Two black guards go down if you heave a barrel in just the right spot to splinter the floor.



Open the window on this roof and climb inside the new building. Three black guards chat on the far side of the room. Lift the box near the window and throw it at the two closest guards. The floor is made of wooden planks, so the box should break through the floor and send the two guards crashing down below. Depending on the fall, you will face either corpses or badly damaged adversaries.

The third guard makes a fatal mistake when he charges you.

The third guard charges you. Deal with him however you like, just don't take so long that one of his buddies from before can climb back up and attack you from behind. The dragon crate by the window holds a health potion, and the crate in the rafters above (reached by the dangling chain) contains two mana potions.



Pick up more items on the way to the last guard.



Find the stairs that descend to the next floor and scour the open rooms. In the linen room on your left, a dragon crate contains a health potion, while the one in the hallway seals away a mana potion.



Tread carefully on the ledges outside the building.



The final black guard watches out the window in the next room. If you're quiet, you can sneak up behind him. Make some noise and he'll meet you in the hallway. If you don't feel like a swordfight, sneak up behind him first, then return to smashing the dragon crates after the combat concludes.



Menelag repels the necromancer, but he can't deal with the ghoul too.

To reach Leanna and Menelag, you must successfully cross the ledges outside the open window in the last room. Hop up on the ledge and use the fallen windowpane to reach the next ledge. Run across it and jump to the far corner. Dash across this one to reach the stairs, then wind up those stairs to find the window to Menelag's chambers.

Menelag begs you to go after the stolen Shantiri Crystal.

No matter how fast you run, a necromancer lord and a ghoul beat you to Menelag. The old wizard repels the necromancer lord with a spell, but the ghoul leaps off Leanna and



mortally wounds Menelag. Leaving him for dead, the ghoul grabs the Shantiri Crystal in Menelag's room and escapes out the big window.



Out and up over the roofs you go in search of the ghoul.

As you enter, Leanna cries over her dying uncle and the old wizard asks you to hurry after the Crystal. You have no choice, so you leave them behind to scramble over rooftops and chase after the creature.



Chase the ghoul as fast as you can without losing your footing.

Head up the ladders, and then down the roof incline on the other side. Use the small platforms to break your fall and keep the ghoul in sight. On the large stone roof, the ghoul flees across a stone ledge and leaps through a hole in the far wall. You should follow, and as soon as you do, the chapter ends and your serious ghoul chase really begins.

Run across the stone ledge and jump through the hole in the wall to advance to the next chapter.



Dead Man's Trail

Chapter Objectives

- Infiltrate the warehouse.
- Find a way to get inside the necromancers' outpost.
- Go back to the sewers and escape with the Shantiri Crystal.
- Create a diversion to steal the Shantiri Crystal without being spotted by Arantir.

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Ring of the Weaponmaster	Pig house	Inside locked chest
Full Health Potion	Pig house	Inside locked chest
Warehouse Door Key	Town square	Pocket of one of the guards
Assassin's Garb	Upper rampart	Resting on table in archer's room opposite the ladder
Trap Door Key	Barn	Pocket of the guard in the side room
Chainmail Armor	Barracks	One guard's bed in barracks
Staff of the Disciple	Rooftops	On table after rooftops chase
Daggers of the Disciple	Barn	On table in side room
Combat Staff	Underground Cavern	Resting up against large barrel
Ring of Arcane Brilliance	Spider Passage	Next to dead body
Ring of the Weaponmaster	Barracks	On bench
Naga Silksword	Barracks	On bed
Poison Kriss	Three Barrel Room	Pinning dead peasant to barrel

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Ghoul	Holy	Rooftops
Black Guards	Holy	Town Square
Black Guards	Holy	Barn
Spider	Fire	Underground Caverns
Black Guards	Holy	Underground Caverns
Arantir	None	Necromancer Outpost
Black Guards	Holy	Necromancer Outpost



Note

Weapon of Choice

Naga Silksword: You have to battle your way to this sword in the underground barracks, but it's worth it. You get good steel for a melee-oriented character.



Note

Spell of Choice

Fire Trap: Big explosions against human guards means less hacking and slashing for your sword arm. Why not kill two or three enemies with a single wave of your arm?



The Rooftop Shuffle



Rush after the ghoul immediately. If you fall behind, the ghoul escapes!

One of the minions of Arantir, a ghoul, has murdered Menelag and stolen the Shantiri Crystal, and only you and your travel-worn boots can get it back. In the first section of this chapter, you can't rely on your combat prowess; you need to run through a maze of rooftops and death-defying challenges as fast as your soles will carry you or the ghoul will escape with the Crystal.



Caution

Don't think too long at each hurdle along the chase or you'll run out of time. Act swiftly!

You are on a short time limit as soon as the chapter begins. Sit around for more than 10 seconds on most of the rooftop spots and the ghoul gets away with the Crystal. So, get moving right away and head out the only exit you can—onto the city roofs. Turn right on the first roof and look for the open window. Watch that you don't slip off this roof, or any of the other steep surfaces. It's a long, long way down.



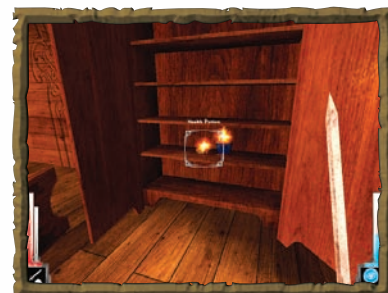
Follow the ghoul through the first building and leap across to the next.

Climb in the window and drop down to the floor below. Continue through the building until you see a wooden platform and a large gap between your floor and the roof across the street. Yep, you're going to

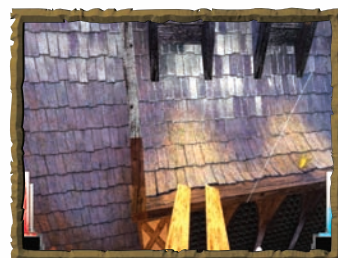
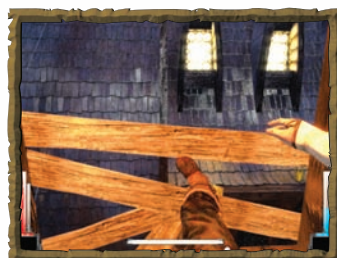
have to make that jump. Start back five or six paces and sprint to the very edge before throwing yourself across the space. With enough speed and the proper leap, you should cross the gap and land on the far roof slope.



A villager points out the escaping ghoul, but you can still grab a health potion before you dash out the door.



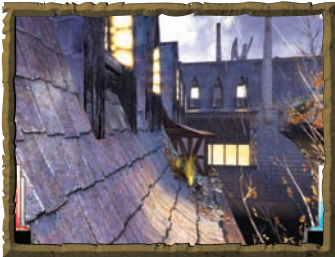
On the far roof, climb up to your right and into the next open window. Slide down into a library. A villager in the corner points to the far doorway on your left—the direction the ghoul went. Clamber over the broken furniture and quickly open the wardrobe on your left. You don't have much time, though you do have enough to grab the health and mana potions inside.



Kick out the boards and carefully tread over the planks to the next roof.

Smash open the boards barricading the doorway ahead and wait for the debris to clear. Once you can see properly, walk across the set of planks to the next rooftop and turn right.

Dead Man's Trail



Heave yourself up the next set of roofs.



Cross quickly to a small roof at about chest height and haul yourself up to the upper roof. Run across this roof and grab the lip of the next elevated roof. Once you pull yourself up, turn right again and slide along the roof and down the second set of planks. You should be on a plot of land with grass and some trees.



Another long jump brings you closer to the Shantiri Crystal.



Another leap of faith is in front of you. Sprint across the grass and throw yourself at full speed toward the pointy rock outcropping and launch off there to land on the wooden platform on the far side. Step up the planks to the open window in the back of the room.



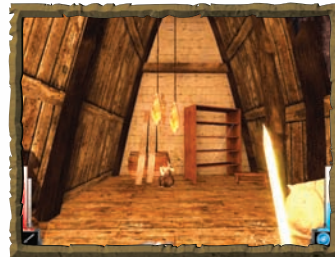
Another heart-wrenching leap brings you to an open window.



Be very careful when you slide out this window. A normal step out will drop you over the short ledge and down to your death.



Fall out and press back toward the safety of the wall to ensure that you stay on the ledge. Put your back to the wall to get as much of a running start as possible, then sprint and leap across to the roof on the other side of the street.



Leave the terrified woman and charge after the ghoul, who's fled in the opposite direction.

Turn right and climb up the short roof at arm's reach. Once up top, search for the open window and drop inside. A terrified woman huddles on the ground. Leave her and grab two cured hams hanging in the room if you're hungry. A health potion rests atop the long crate to your right as you exit through the opposite door.



The chain leads you to the top of the ruined buildings.

Out this door, you have a short wooden platform to a hanging chain in the middle of an otherwise impossible jump. Sprint out and catch hold of the chain. Climb to the top and drop onto the slanted wooden platform (not on the roof halfway up). You've reached a section of ruined buildings, so watch your steps carefully from here to the end of the chase.





Leap again and then look for a second chain to bring you higher.

Follow the wooden planks until you see the stone landing on the other side of a gap. It's another big jump; limber up and leap across to solid stone again. You can spot the ghoul ahead, but it climbs up the stone wall, while you have to discover another method.

The answer lies in another chain to your left after you make the jump. Use that chain to reach a long roof in front of a series of closed windows. Run across this roof and jump onto the rickety wooden platform on the far side. You crash through the floor of the higher level, which is good because you want the lower level.



Watch your step on the tilting wooden plank area.

The long plank that connects one side of the platform to the other is like a seesaw. As you put weight on a side, it begins to sink. Stay on it too long and you will fall off. Run across to the far side and it will begin to sink in that direction. The trick is to run across it at an even speed so that your weight balances out. If you find it sinking too quickly at the far end, make a short jump to land safely on the steady platform ahead.



Climb up to the final ledge in the chase sequence.

Turn right and climb the large stone blocks that lead up to the final ledge. Cross this ledge and leap off onto the grass beyond. You find no ghoul—the creature has escaped with the Shantiri Crystal for now. However, you do find a stone entrance to the necromancer-controlled part of town, which is exactly where you want to search for the Crystal. Inside the doorway, pick up the Staff of the Disciple (Collector's Edition) on the table and beef up your staff combat if you have Magic Affinity 1.



The grass landing and stone entrance signify the end of the chase.

Barn Yarn



Drop into the necromancer-controlled area to earn two skill points.

The ghoul slips through your grasp. On the plus side, the creature leads you to the necromancers and their guards. Because you couldn't grab the Crystal from the ghoul, the next step is to infiltrate the necromancers' outpost and track down your stolen item that way.

Dead Man's Trail

Head into the dark room near the end of the chase area and look for a window that overlooks a back alley. It's a bit of a drop, and you will take damage from the fall unless you land on the series of ledges or the short piece of wood sticking out of the wall (it looks like the tip of a diving board). For reaching the necromancer outpost, you receive two skill points. Spend them on whatever skill track you feel works the best for you. If you have leftover points and haven't spent them on your fire spells yet, consider Fire Trap. This spell proves awesome at several junctures of the map, particularly in confined areas where you can force several guards to step on your trap at once.



The room by the pigs contains a locked chest that you want to open.

In the alley, turn right and smash through the wooden gate that closes off a plot of houses behind. A couple of pigs wander about the area, and you want to open the door directly across from them on your right. Inside, you'll find a locked chest. Here, the Burglar skill shines through. It costs nine skill points (one point for Alertness and eight points for Burglar), but once you have the top thief skill, you can open any locked chest and many locked doors along the quest. It all depends on how you want to play through the game.

Flip over baskets in the houses or the barn to uncover hidden potions.

Assuming you can open the chest, you'll find a full health potion and the Ring of the Weaponmaster. The ring adds +3 percent to your critical hit chance (double damage on power strikes). Switch on and off with the Ring of Regeneration if you can—Weaponmaster on during combat for extra offense; Regeneration on after combat to heal up all your wounds. Before you leave the house, flip over the basket in the corner for another health potion.



If you continue around the corner and walk past the pigs, you stumble upon an entrance to the sewer. This is the shortcut to the necromancers' barn; it brings you up into the barn's side room with the single guard. However, you may want to do a bit of killing first, in which case forget about the sewer passage for now. Be sure you grab the magic mushroom and the mushroom in the grass near the sewer entrance.



Remove the guard by the door before approaching the town square.

Return to the main alley and head to the opposite corner. Expect a guard at the wooden gate leading into the town square. He usually parks himself in the doorway, with his back to you, watching the town square. A single arrow to the head kills him if your aim strikes true. After the shot, just to be on the safe side, sprint toward him and run him through with your short sword. You don't want him to reveal your position to the other guards too early.



The guards in the square put up a fight. Vanquish them anyway.

Out in the town square, two guards chat off to your right. A third and fourth are up in the hayloft and will descend once you attack, and a fifth patrols the balcony to the left and above. If you make quick work of the ground guards, you won't have to worry about the fifth guard until the first four aren't moving.



You can Fire Trap the spot directly in front of the two chatting guards. When they see you, they'll detonate it and cause a big explosion. Both will usually be obliterated, or start crawling away from the severe wounds. Use your combat skills, the fire pit, or the destructible posts to bring down the third guard.

Seize the key off the fallen guard.

One of the guards has the Warehouse Door Key. You need this to enter the barn and collect another skill point. Snatch the key from the dead guard and move quickly to the base of the balcony. You don't want the archer guard up top to fill you with arrows.



Trick the upper balcony guard to step near the ladder, where you can knock him off with one shot.

Climb up the long ladder quickly and dash to the far wall. Most likely the fifth guard will have heard the noise and readied an arrow. Zigzag on the landing to dodge the one or two shots he gets off before you reach him with your sword. Do this without hesitation and he won't have much time to swap out his bow for a sword. If the guard waits for you on the top of the ladder, slide around him until your back is against the wall and he stands over the ladder. A swift kick sends him plummeting to his doom.

Pick up the Assassin's Garb in the dead guard's room.

There's a small stash in the guard room at the end of the balcony. Baked bread and a bottle of berry juice sit on the table, and a health potion and



mana potion rest in the chest. The Assassin's Garb lies on the guard's bed. The suit adds +1 to your armor class and increases the efficiency of your stealth skills. It requires Stealth 1 to equip. Also, pick up the Long Bow next to the Assassin's Garb.



The surprise access to the barn lies in the hayloft door.



Note

There is a magic ring and some potions in a secret area above the barn.

Once the town square is secure, you have several access points to the barn. You can try the main door in the town square. This is the most obvious entrance, and the guards are watching it. Not recommended.

You can also double back to the sewer grate by the pigs. This slips you behind the guards, but you might run into a guard patrol, so be on the lookout near the grate. Smash open both dragon crates in the town square before you go anywhere. The first one holds a mana potion and two food rations; the second contains a health potion and two pieces of baked bread.



The sewer grate leads into the side room of the barn, but it's guarded too.

Probably the most effective entrance is through the hayloft. Climb up on the hut above the fire (hop on the crate to reach the hut). From the hut, jump onto the hanging chain and pull yourself up to the hayloft. The dragon crate in the corner holds a stonemason's potion. A door on the right side can be picked or opened with the Warehouse Door Key. You gain one more skill point for entering the barn.

When the door swings open, you startle a nearby guard. Slice him quickly with your sword from the side, or with a simple step from behind for maximum damage. His partner should be close, probably on the bottom level patrolling. Jump down on him for a sneak attack, or break out one of your spells such as Freeze (to slow him down) or Charm (to help out with the third guard). The third guard lies through the door to the side room (the one with the barbecue grill). Finish him while he still hasn't figured out what's going on. You can collect some food rations and a health potion under the basket in the room. Pick up the ribs cooking on the grill and the Daggers of the Disciple (Collector's Edition) on the table, which will help your dagger combat if you have Stealth 1.



Once you open the barn door, don't give the guards a chance to recover.

A small, dark room adjacent to the side room has the sewer grate in the floor. This is where you come up if you take the secret sewer passage. Conveniently, there's a chain nearby that you can use to reach the barn's hayloft level.

Out in the main area, a trap door leads to the underground caverns. Recover the Trap Door Key from one of the barn guards (probably the one on the hayloft level) and open the door for another skill point.



Recovering the Crystal



The trap door leads to an elaborate wine cellar and more.

Follow the underground passage beneath the trap door around a bend and into the first room. You have two choices here: a long ramp to your left and a door straight ahead. Two guards patrol the end of the long ramp in the next room, so quietly cross the room to the far door. Two guards patrol the end of the long ramp in the next room, so quietly cross the room to the far door and pocket the Combat Staff along the way.



The Tome of the Dragon Smithy allows you to craft your own magic weapon.

You've reached the forge, and believe it or not, the blacksmith section is in working order. Pick up the Tome of the Dragon Smithy on the table to your right. Read the instructions carefully and you can create your own item—a long sword. All the necessary tools are in the room—the steel bar, hammer, bellows, the mold, etc. The long sword adds +3 damage if you can wield it (requires Melee Combat 1).



Create your new sword with the forge tools.

If you want to try the shortcut and avoid the majority of the guards in the caverns, break through the wooden barricade in the forge. Follow the dark cavern passage and click on your Dark Vision. A single spider guards the area; once you splatter it, you can bolt all the way down to the final area with Arantir. Be sure to pick up the Ring of Arcane Brilliance on the ground near the dead body in the passage.



Fight the spider in the side cavern but avoid the guards.



If you choose to go the long way, you'll fight a few more guards but gain more treasure. Return to the first room and set up by the ramp. Two guards patrol just inside the next room. Load up a ranged attack (FireTrap works phenomenally well) and blast at the guards from the safety of the first room. If you set up a FireTrap at the ramp's base, the two guards blow themselves to pieces and you won't have to do more than wave your hand.



Fire Trap explodes for thunderous effect within the cavern confines.



In the second room, the left-most door is the guards' barracks. Rummage through their belongings for a suit of Chainmail



Armor and extra arrows. The Chainmail gives you better armor protection but hampers your stealth skills. You can also score the Ring of the Weaponmaster and the Naga Silksword in the barracks.



The guards leave behind Chainmail Armor and daggers in a poor villager's body.

Return to the second room and try the next door. It's a room with three barrels and a poor villager impaled on the middle one. He's had a run-in with the necromancers. Pull his body off the barrel and you can retrieve the Poison Kriss daggers. A chest next to the wall holds an antidote and health potion.



Travel down the corridor to one last guard post.

Leave the second room through the exit passage and continue to the next room, which holds two more guards. There's a stack of barrels at the top of the slope where you enter. You can kick one of these barrels to land directly on the closest guard, leaving him either dead or severely stunned. Sprint down to the room's lower level and pull out your staff if you go at both of them together or Long sword for one (short sword if you can't wield the Silksword).



A well-placed Fire Trap eliminates the competition.

Dead Man's Trail

Alternately, instead of kicking the barrel, you can line up a near-perfect Fire Trap right where the closest guard paces. When he triggers the big bang, storm down the slope and catch the other stunned guard by surprise. You might get lucky and both may fry in the explosion.



Rush into Arantir's outpost and he strangles you with his magical power.

After the third room, tread slowly down the corridor and stop when you reach Arantir's lair (you'll see a hole in the wall and a dark room with lots of prison cells). Listen carefully and you can hear Arantir plotting in the background. Xana tells you about his magic portal, and you can see the Shantiri Crystal on a pedestal next to Arantir and his guards.



Release the prisoners for a sufficient diversion.

The problem? If Arantir sees you, he instantly kills you with a telekinetic stranglehold. You can't beat him, and it's useless to fight his guards. You need a distraction.



Hide in the nearby prison cell long enough to snatch the Shantiri Crystal back.



Move to the left in the dark and pull the lever that raises the prison bars. The necromancers' prisoners try to escape, and voilà—instant distraction.



Tip

Wait for a voice clue to steal the Crystal. Otherwise, Arantir will spot you and end your life.

As Arantir and the guards chase after the prisoners, run right and hug the cavern wall until you reach the prison cell closest to the portal. Duck in the cell and wait for the voice command that says, "Now's my chance." Rush around the corner, steal the Shantiri Crystal (telekinesis is the safest option), and run back toward the hole in the wall that you originally came through. This is the only way out of lair that avoids Arantir's deadly powers.



Run for the sewer exit and don't look over your shoulder.

Arantir orders the area locked down and the guards to fan out and find you. No matter how good you think you are, you can't fight your way out. Instead, return to the sewer area between Arantir's lair and the third guard room. Slide into the knee-high water and run for the sewer tunnel to your right. That's your secret exit out and your salvation with Crystal in hand.



Across the Sea of Blood

Chapter Objectives

- Find a way to get inside the boat.
- Get rid of the black guards manning the ballistas.
- Lower the gangway to the dock.
- Clear any possible threat on the dock and the bridge; Leanna will not move until it is safe.
- Keep the black guards off the boat.
- Follow Leanna to the cabin.
- Lift the anchor.

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Simple Key	Second ship room	On belt of guard
Scroll of Freeze	Prison	In corner dragon crate
Scroll of Fireball	Prison	In corner dragon crate
Long Sword	Prison	Table on upper landing
Blood-stained Key	Prison	On necromancer's belt
Wizard Robe	Sleeping guard's room	On table in room
Rusty Key	Sleeping guard's room	Hanging on the wall hook
Elven Bow	Ballista room	Resting against wall in room
Staff of Reflection	Docks	Near entrance
Ring of Arcane Brilliance	Ship	On shelf in room with boar's head
Sword of the Disciple	Top Deck	Resting against wall before ladder to top deck

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Black Guards	Fire	Docks
Black Guards	Fire	Boat
Necromancers	Fire	Boat
Goblins	Lightning	Boat



Note

Weapon of Choice

Poison Kriss: Inside the ship's tight quarters, you don't want a long swing. Your new daggers strike quickly, backstab from the shadows, and poison every minute or so.



Note

Spell of Choice

Sanctuary: Your mega-powerful defensive spell turns you nearly invulnerable for 30 seconds, which is exactly what you'll need when you face the necromancer's crew on the docks.



Underwater Assassin



Before your meeting with Leanna, you have a bad dream about Xana possessing you.

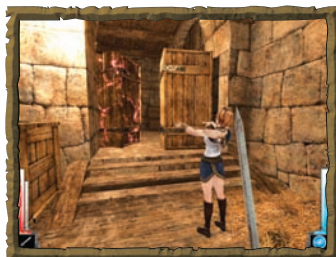


Before you leave the sewers, you lose consciousness and dream of Phenrig and Xana. It's the same scene when Phenrig summoned Xana to be your spirit guide, except now you remember (or is that "dream"?) the end of the scene. Xana possesses you, but in a brutal, savage manner, ripping into your body as her true, demonic form. It's starting to paint an uneasy picture in your mind about past events.



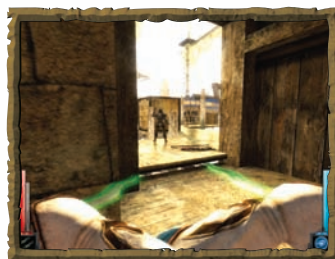
The Shantiri Crystal is yours again—now you just have to get it to Temple Island.

You do still have the Shantiri Crystal, which is a good thing. Arantir wants it back, so it's a race to Temple Island in search of the Skull of Shadows. When you meet with Leanna at the end of the sewer system, near the docks, she explains that your boat was ready to set sail, but necromancers and their guards captured it. They plan to sail to the island themselves—with Leanna's boat!—unless you stop them.



Leanna stretches her magical muscle and opens the barricade for you.

You can't reach the docks without some help. Leanna casts a powerful telekinesis spell and opens the barricade temporarily to let you through to the docks. Once you pass through to the other side, it closes behind you for good, and Leanna doesn't show up until the end of the chapter. If you want the wooden staff resting against the wall or the health and mana potions in the dragon crate on the top shelf above Leanna's head, grab them before stepping through the barricade.



Ambush the first guard from behind and toss him in the water.

On the other side of the barricade, stick to the left wall and peek around the corner. One guard patrols on the near side of the docks. If you're quiet and catch him with his back turned, you can sneak up and kick him into the water where he drowns instantly (apparently he can't swim). Otherwise, you can backstab him (if you bought up to Stealth 2) or slash him the old-fashioned way. When you're safe, grab the Staff of Reflection on the docks and add it to your collection of weaponry.



Swim underwater and surprise the second guard.



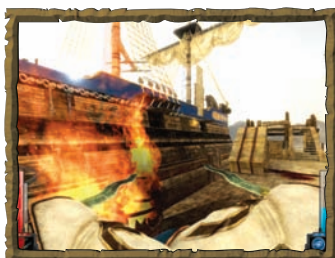
Caution

Cross the open docks and you die. Sneaking into the boat is your only safe option.

Dive into the water near the drowned guard and swim underwater to the far left ladder. A second guard patrols on the docks above the ladder. Come up for air at the ladder and wait until you see the guard walk by. Once his back is to you, scurry up the ladders and stab away at his exposed back or side. Don't wait too long or he'll walk into the middle of the docks and alert all the other guards. Once the ship's guards spot you, they open the ballista bay doors and fire exploding arrows at you. It's tempting to run out and break open the dragon crates on the docks, but don't bother. The food rations aren't worth risking your neck for even if you're short on health aids.



The guards manning the ship's ballistae open fire if you attempt to cross the open dock.



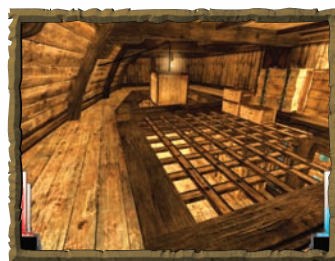
The only sensible way to enter the ship is to use the crane. You can winch over a platform normally set aside for hauling cargo on and off the ship. Position the platform between the dock and an open portal on the ship's closest side. You can now hop onto the platform, then jump through the window and into the ship.



Winch the crane into place so you can leap across to the ship's open portal.

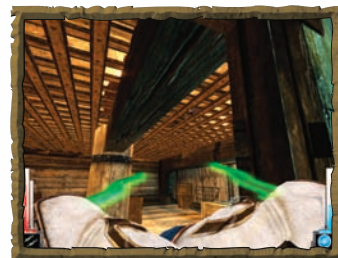


Ship Shape



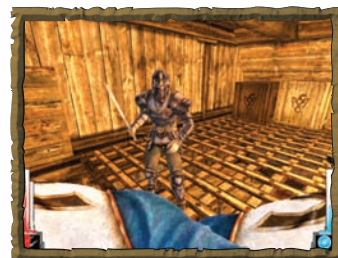
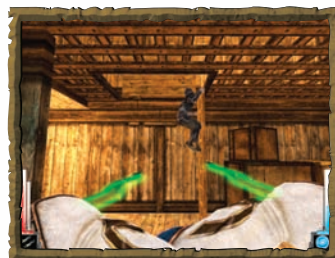
Drop a crate on the head of the first ship guard.

Step into the ship and look down through the grated floor. A guard paces back and forth in the room. Wait for him to walk toward the far end of the room and follow him above quietly. He pauses under the hanging crate. Cut the rope and let the crate crash down on him. That's one less guard to stress over.



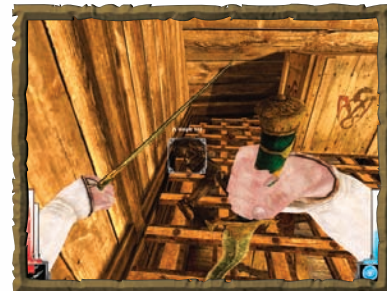
The next room brings you more trouble.

Drop down to the lower level and walk back to the side nearest the entrance portal. An exit has been barricaded with wooden planks. Kick that out and slip down the corridor to the next door.



Fight off the two guards and pocket the Simple Key for later.

When you open the door, you will probably alert the two guards in the next room. Thankfully, you are in

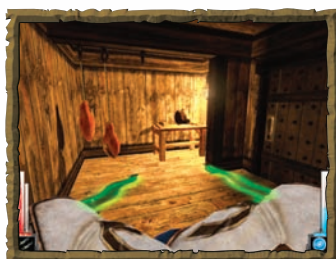


a great defensive position. They start above you in another split-level room, and at least one of them will climb down the ladder to reach you. Break out your Poison Kriss daggers and rip him apart as he descends. Odds are he won't make it to the last rung alive.

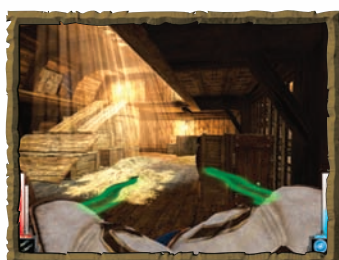
The second guard holds a key on his belt. If you know he isn't camped above the ladder, jet on up and circle-dance around him as your daggers slice him to ribbons. Retrieve the key and open the dragon crates for food rations, a health potion, and a mana potion.



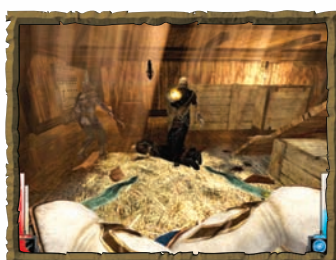
Open the locked door with your new key and enter the ham room.



Enter the room with the greenish light and use your key on the locked door. Enter the room with the hanging hams; You can add those to your inventory for later food rations, plus pocket the piece of bread on the table and another Ring of Brilliance on the shelf. Heal up any wounds and store up some mana—the next room will test your combat skills in small, confined spaces.

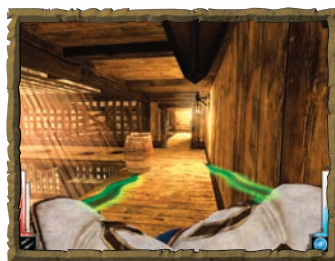


Your first combat with necromancers proves a challenge in the tight confines.

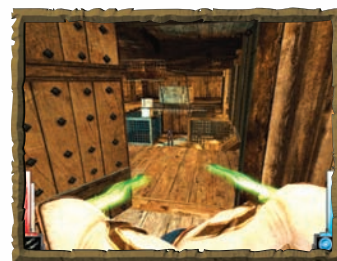


As you approach the door, you hear two necromancers and a guard talking. Listen to what they have to say, then open the door and duck inside. You don't have much cover near the door; your best initial approach is to head straight for the first necromancer and power strike to poison him. His partner drops down from the upper level. If you don't take one of them out of the picture quickly, the necromancers may overwhelm you with their spells.

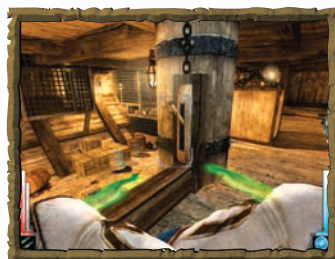
Slide around the room, slicing at anything that moves. The necromancers throw Flame Arrows at you, or try to slow you with a sudden Freeze spell. Because they have ranged attacks and can hit you anywhere in the room, make the necromancers your priority and just keep ducking out of the way of the guard's sword. If you bought Sanctuary, now's a good time to throw it up for extra defense against the sword whacks and necromancer blasts.



Approach the prison area with caution.

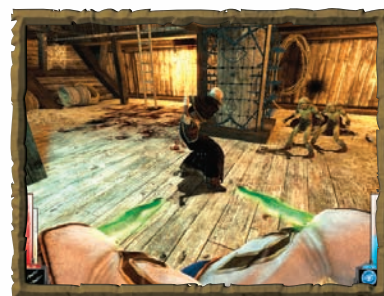


Upon the necromancers' deaths, search the area for two dragon crates and collect a health and mana potion. Follow the ramp to the upper level and then cross into the second half of the large room through the door in the wall between the half-rooms. The door on the lower level here brings you into the prison.



Release the goblins from their cages to do your fighting for you.

The prison houses goblins in cages, a necromancer, and two guards. You could opt to fight all three undead sympathizers the hard way, but why bother? Pull the lever immediately inside the entrance door on your left instead. This opens the cages, releases the goblins, and causes lots of chaos.



Finish off the remaining goblins before they think of you as lunch.

The goblins spring out of their prison cells, tearing into their captors, knocking over a lantern to cause a fire, generally causing mayhem. Let the goblins fight the guards, and then pick off whoever survives.

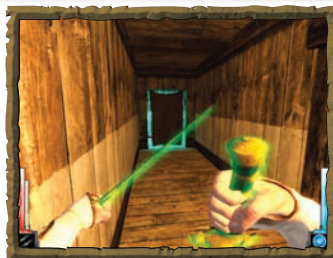


Grab the next key and move farther through the ship.

Scour the area well for loot. The dragon crate in the corner holds a Scroll of Fireball and a Scroll of Freeze. A second crate gives you more food rations. Climb up the ladder opposite the entrance landing and you find more: a few bottles of berry juice, baked bread, and the long sword. Take the Blood-Stained Key from the necromancer you killed and open the door around the corner.



The next room contains a ladder that sends you up a level. One mana potion rests near the crate in the corner before you climb up the ladder. Once up, you have a choice of two doors in the room above the ladder. The left one leads to a storage area. The right leads to more action.



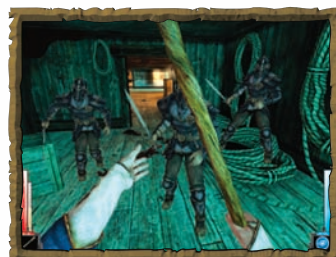
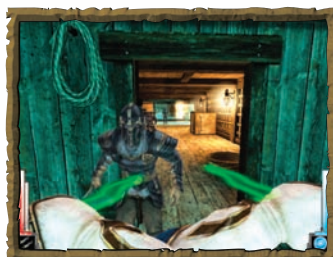
A side room stores some goodies in dragon crates.



Of course, we're going right. Enter the corridor and turn down the longer part of the hallway and push past the curtain into the greenish room. Smash open the dragon crates for more food rations.

Turn around now and head down the other part of the corridor, through the curtain in the well-lit section. A door here opens into a room with a sleeping guard. You can ambush him if he's asleep; otherwise, he will wake up and may try to ambush you himself. When you enter, watch for him behind the door, or hidden to your right around the room's L-shaped corner. Use your Poison Kriss to disorient him with poison and then slay him with several cuts to the sides or head.

The guard hoards a stash in his bedroom. A suit of Wizard Robes rests on the table. A bottle of berry juice and a mana potion are on the top wall shelf. Finally, a Rusty Key hangs around the corner on the wall.



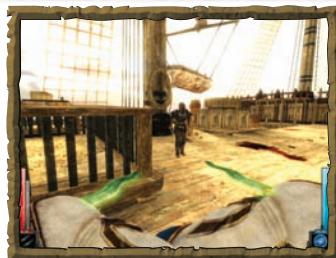
Track down the ballista crew and teach them a lesson or three.

Return to the green room past the other curtain and use your key to open the locked door on the far side of the room. You've reached the ballista room and its guards! Punish them for seizing control of the ship. Poke the first one with your Poison Kriss to give him an unhealthy green glow, then switch to your staff to stun the others. Rely on the corridor behind you as defense; when the guards press in, kick them back or retreat to the corridor to gain extra space.



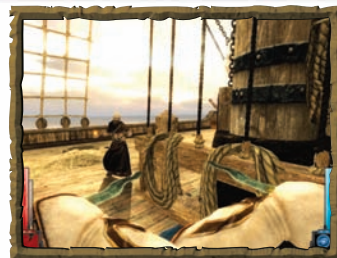
After you mop up the ballista crowd, reap the rewards with a line of dragon crates and the Elven Bow.

Eventually, they fall and earn you two more skill points. Search the remaining sections of the ships for the Elven Bow (in the ballista room) and food rations, and two mana potions (in the storage room). When you're ready, walk to the far side of the ballista room and use either door to exit to the bridge area.



The necro bridge crew must be stopped at all costs.

On the main section of the deck, a necromancer and his three guards command the ship. To regain control of the ship, you must eliminate all four



enemies. You may have some room here to brandish a long sword, though if you get squeezed into a corner or against obstacles, the Poison Kriss can cut you out of a bind much easier.

Invasion of the Necromancers



Dirty tricks can earn you cheap kills on the bridge.

Fire off any ranged spells you've mastered and then close on the remaining enemies for some melee. Pay attention to the ship's environment. You can break the barrel shelf near the anchor room, causing the barrels to roll down the deck and squash any in their way. You can also cut the rope on the mast, which swings the suspended lifeboat like a battering ram. Make sure you're not on that side of the deck when it swings loose and you should nail at least one of the enemies.



All seems quiet on the bridge until you reach the upper section.

When you exit the ship's interior, you enter the lower section of the ship's bridge. There are no guards, but there is two Scrolls of Freeze, one Scroll of Fireball, and a dragon crate with a mana potion inside. The Sword of the Disciple rests up against the wall, yours for the taking. Grab those and then climb up the ladder to the main bridge and scout around for enemy activity. The Sword of the Disciple (Collector's Edition) rests up against the wall, yours for the taking. Elsewhere around the main bridge, you can break open the dragon crates for more food rations if you're low on health.



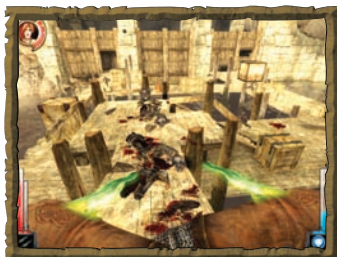
Lower the gangplank and let Leanna and company on board.

Once you clear the bridge, you gain two more skill points. Walk over to the gangplank, unbolt it, and wait for Leanna and her men to run onboard the ship.



Kick the guards back and throw up your Sanctuary spell to help repel the invaders.

It's not over yet. Leanna and her crew need time to prepare the ship, and the necromancers still have men on the docks. Your job is to defend the main deck when the guard assault begins. Position yourself on the gangplank to prepare for the assault. More than a dozen guards storm at you in the next two minutes, and the gangplank provides great defense—they can only squeeze one or two men at a time, plus you can knock them off the sides and into the water (where they will drown) with one big swing instead of the several cuts you normally need to kill them.



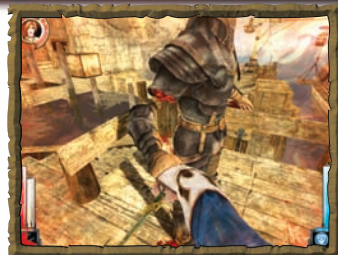
Keep fighting—it's going to be a bloody massacre.



Tip

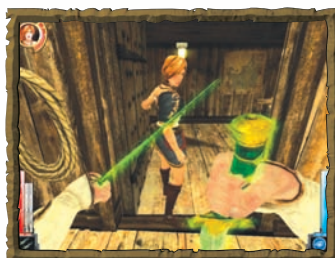
On the gangplank, a kick may be better than a sword swing if you can push a guard back or heave him into the water.

Now's when you really need your Sanctuary spell. With so many bodies taking swings at you, it's inevitable you'll take damage—possibly life-threatening damage—and Sanctuary's shield can suck up much of that potential damage. Keep swinging, stabbing, and slicing to repel the invaders. When the last one finally falls, there will be a trail of blood seemingly the length of the Nile and you'll be three skill points richer.



Only when the last guard falls can you take a breather.

Leanna marvels at your combat prowess and orders the ship to set sail. She invites you into the anchor room, where she fumbles for words on how much she cares for you before being interrupted by her men. Turn the big wheel to pick up the anchor and the ship is underway to the mysterious Temple Island.



Pull up the anchor while Leanna reveals some feelings for you.

That night, you have another disturbing dream. Arantir dances with Leanna, then he turns the dance over to you. Instead of delightfully spinning Leanna around or embracing her, you stab a dagger through her stomach. She dies, while Arantir warns you of dark things to come.



Another disturbing dream shows Arantir and Leanna dancing.

What does it all mean? Would you ever do anything that cruel to someone for whom you may have feelings? The answers lie with the Skull of Shadows on the island ahead.

The Temple of the Spider

Chapter Objectives

- Find the temple entrance.
- Kill the orcs guarding the outer temple buildings.
- Find a way to open the portcullis that has a broken lever.
- Use the Rope Bow to get up out of the tunnels.
- Escape from the pao kai.
- Kill the remaining orcs that block your path.
- Follow Leanna.
- Open the portcullis.
- Kill the orcs who are in the main hall.
- Find the crystal chamber and restore the temple's energy.
- Go back to see Leanna in the main hall.
- Kill the pao kai.
- Explore the tunnel that Leanna has revealed.
- Find a way out of the spider lair.
- Kill the cyclops (optional).
- Find a path to the upper temple.
- Locate the elevator mechanism room.
- Fix the elevator.
- Return the Shantiri Crystal to its place.
- Find a path to reach the other side of the barricaded door.
- Take the stairs back to the elevator to access the crystal chamber.
- Defeat Aratrok.
- Open the magic rooms with the Spider Key (optional).

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Rope Bow	Underground tunnels	By dead orc in lever room
Poison Bow	Underground tunnels	Secret treasure room reached with Rope Bow
Steel Bar	Temple interior	Goblin chest by stone slab trap
Lightning Daggers	Mountainside	Secret treasure room by battering ram

Item	General Location	Specifics
Spider Key	Crystal Chamber	On Aratrok's belt
Ring of Regeneration	Power Chamber	Altar in front of locked portcullis
Superior Naga Silksword	Temple Interior	Secret compartment reached by using Telekinesis
Ring of Might	Temple Interior	Goblin chest by stone slab
Staff of the Firelord	Goblin warrens	Secret treasure room
Gutting Kriss	Mountainside	In tunnel near entrance
Ring of the Phoenix	Mountainside	On ground in expedition room

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Orc	Lightning	Temple Entrance
Facehuggers	Lightning	Underground Tunnels
Spiders	Fire	Underground Tunnels
Pao Kai	Fire, Poison	Temple Entrance
Orcs	Lightning	Altar Room
Goblins	Lightning	Temple Interior
Pao Kai	Fire	Altar Room
Spiders	Fire	Spider Maze
Spiders	Fire	Spider Pit
Goblins	Lighting	Goblin Warrens
Cyclops	Lightning	Goblin Warrens
Orcs	Lightning	Mountainside
Spiders	Fire	Crystal Chamber
Aratrok	Lightning	Crystal Chamber
Ghoul	Holy	Altar Room
Arantir	Holy	Altar Room



Note

Weapon of Choice

Rope Bow: Without the Rope Bow you would be stuck inside numerous traps and dead-ends, so for that alone it earns MVP status.

Into the Temple



Your small raiding party approaches the temple from an isolated beach.



After a long struggle to hold onto the Shantiri Crystal, Leanna and her crew have brought you to the Temple of the Island. Leanna and two bodyguards escort you on a rowboat to the temple's island, making sure to land on an isolated section of beach to avoid being spotted.



The temple's orc guards make it clear they don't want visitors.

You soon stumble upon two wounded soldiers from one of Menelag's earlier expeditions. They report of orcs in the area and a giant pao kai—a dragon with immeasurable strength and power. The previous expedition has been wiped out, except for a few men still trapped inside the temple. It looks like you can add more headaches to your near-impossible mission.



Tip

Leanna is a valuable asset; exploit her abilities, but be careful she doesn't die.

You now have the option of having Leanna and her bodyguards join you or stay in place. Unless you feel you can't cut through all the orcs ahead by yourself, leave Leanna and her men behind. You don't want Leanna dying and ending the quest, and she's very fragile. If you do rely on her and her bodyguards' spell casting, stay between Leanna and any orc you find and definitely go out of your way to kill any orc that targets her.



Slip behind the orc defenses from the left side.



Approach the temple by hugging the left cliff and staying close to the rocks as you pass by the two unfortunate souls hung on the tree. Creep along the rocks until you see a hole in the first building. You can slip into the dark section and remain undetected as you scout out the building.



Jump out of the shadows and catch the first two orcs by surprise.

To your right, two orcs talk in the next room. Prepare your favorite weapon and rush through the wall's hole to surprise them. You should get at least one strong stroke into an orc hide before they recover. Avoid getting sandwiched between the two—that means you've probably exposed your back to one of them—while slicing and moving. Stay inside the building so you don't alert any other orcs on patrol.



The Temple of the Spider

Sneak up on the buildings' rooftops for a crack at the next guard.

Once the first two orcs fall, return out your original hole and climb up on this building's rooftop. Two planks lead to a higher spot, and then a wood beam spans the gap between this roof and the next. On the second building, an orc watches the sands below. If you sneak up quietly, you can stab him from behind and maybe finish him before he puts away his bow and draws a cleaver. You can also kick him off the roof, which kills him instantly, but it also leaves a dead body that another orc can spot and throw the whole place on high alert.



Remove the remaining orcs on the temple outskirts before venturing up to the final defenders up top.

One orc may be scouting on the next roof. You can cross the fallen piece of wood to reach him quickly. Also, look for a team of two on the ground below. Silence anyone on the roofs first, then drop down for a sneak attack on the ground guards. Peak around corners to spot the moving orcs and line up your best attack route—you can even wait for one to approach a corner and get a free swing on the surprised foe.



Leap across the gap and cross to opposite side to attack the next set of orcs.

With three orcs down, jump across the gap from the second building to the upper embankment at the base of the temple walls. All the orcs on your side should be wiped out. Pay attention to the opposite side, and when you're sure no orc is looking, burst across the plaza to the other side.



Stay on your toes to defeat the final rush of entrance defenders.

You've cleared the initial guards, except reinforcements will be arriving soon. After the last of the lower guards have been killed, orc guards from the upper area slowly head down to see what all the commotion is about. Engage any orc you see quickly; you may wipe him out before his buddies can back him up properly. A Lightning Bolt can hurt or stun an orc if you have time; otherwise, rely on your quick feet and a strong sword arm to hack the defenders to pieces.



Approach from an elevated position to ambush the next orc.

Stay near the wall and turn to face the buildings. A rock outcropping leads up to the first roof. Jump up those rocks for better elevation and a shot at the other orcs in the area.



Leanna joins you and helps you find an alternate path into the temple.

The game rewards you with one skill point when you defeat all the entrance guards; until you receive the skill update message, there are still orcs out there. When the last one drops, pick up the Scroll of Freeze near the first orc area and wait for Leanna. She approaches and leads you to a portcullis, past a dead soldier with a health potion and mana potion nearby. The lever to the portcullis is broken, so you must find another way in. A nearby shaft that leads to the underground chambers below the temple entrance holds the answer. Drop down there and look for the lever that lifts the broken portcullis.



Get your bearings in the underground tunnels and find the planked-up room.

The shaft puts you in the underground tunnel system. Leave the first room via the only tunnel and watch for some small spiders around the drop in the floor. Let the spiders come to you across the drop and slash them when they get in sword range. Drop down and smash through the planks barring the room below and prepare for battle.



Facehuggers swarm the main chamber.

Some facehuggers protect the room and will swarm on you at the entrance. Slash the first one back with your sword, then push into the room and switch to your staff. Wield the staff in a wide circle to



keep them from grabbing at you with their tentacles and continue to whack away as you constantly move to open space.



Climb up into the higher passage to find the secret lever to the entrance portcullis.

After you club the last one, climb up the higher passage (not the more obvious ground-level passage). Travel the passage until you reach another barricaded room. Kick your way inside and retrieve the Rope Bow, a Scroll of Fireball, and Scroll of Fire Trap near the dead orc in the corner. The secret lever to the portcullis lies in the wall next to the dead orc. Pull the lever to open it near Leanna above and earn another skill point.



Use your new Rope Bow to discover a hidden treasure chamber.

Don't leave the underground tunnels yet. Now that you have the Rope Bow, retrace your steps to the facehuggers' room and take the other passage. Beware of tiny spiders near the dark intersection at the end (swat at them with any weapon or crush them easily with your foot). In the dark alcove, look up and you'll see a long shaft and a piece of wooden beam running along the roof.



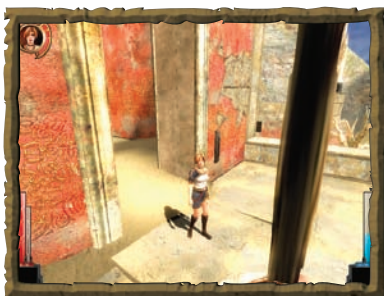
The Temple of the Spider

Fire a rope arrow up and into the beam, then climb up your new rope until you can jump safely into the chamber. Inside you'll find the Poison Bow and a full health potion and an antidote in the chest.



Escape the underground tunnels with a rope up to Leanna.

Return to the portcullis lever room and look up at the ceiling. Notice a jagged hole up there and a wooden beam jutting into view? That's your escape route. Fire an arrow into the wood with your Rope Bow and climb up to meet with Leanna near the opened portcullis.



The pao kai attacks.

You barely say "hi" when the pao kai that the wounded men spoke about earlier swoops into view. In a valiant effort, Leanna's bodyguards fight the pao kai, giving you and her enough time to escape. You have no hope of defeating the dragon here, so run for it. Don't worry—you'll have another chance soon enough.



More orcs defend the building beyond the portcullis.

Run with Leanna to the doorway into the temple over to your right. More orcs guard the connected rooms inside, so make sure you reach them before Leanna does. She fires Flame Arrows to help you, but throw yourself right into combat to deal as much damage as quickly as possible. Again, you can't let her die, and the orcs will assault her if you give them an opening.



Tip

Swat the orcs into the temple firepits and you will have fewer foes to contend with, and some charred orc flesh for dinner.

Bring Leanna up through the partially collapsed hole.

Fight through the orcs past the pao kai and then bring Leanna up with you through a collapsed ceiling. You climb up into a new area with exits to either side. Ask Leanna to stay put again, and go to the boarded-up exit. Kick out the planks and look around carefully for orcs.



Stealth will win you more kills against the next orc group.

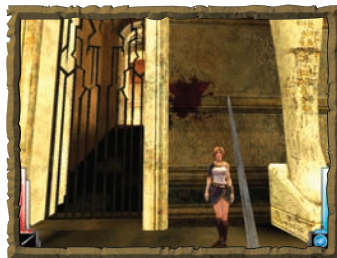
Four orcs patrol the area, usually in pairs of two. Wait until one or two pass in front of your doorway and surprise them from behind if you can. A backstab maneuver can take one out, or unload on them with lightning. Make quick work of the first group before they can call out to the second group.



Follow Leanna to meet up with her man Duncan.

Repeat your tactics on the second group. Use the dilapidated walls and doorways as cover as you sneak into position. After the fourth orc drops, follow Leanna to the wooden doorway sunken in the sand. You meet up with Duncan, a trustworthy soldier of Menelag's, who Leanna asks to wait back by the ship for your return. Leanna then leads you down the new tunnel and into the temple proper.

Against the Pao Kai



Another portcullis bars you and Leanna from reaching the Skull of Shadows.

Continue to follow Leanna deeper into the temple. You'll pass statues and side passages of little interest until you stop before another closed portcullis. Leanna has led you as far as she can; it's up to you to figure out how to open the portcullis. Stop by the nearby altar to gain one of the most powerful magic items in the game, the Ring of Regeneration, as well as two mana potions and a quiver of arrows.

Your Rope Bow bypasses another obstacle.

It's a simple task. The raised arch in the alcove next to the portcullis can't be reached through normal means. Break out your Rope Bow and you can reach many heights you could not previously. Aim at the wood above the arch and shoot out a rope to climb to the next level. Around the bend to your left, flip the lever to raise the portcullis and Leanna runs up to you.



Defeat the orcs guarding the altar room.

Just down the hall, a pile of rubble nearly blocks a passageway. At first, it might seem like any other impassable hallway; it's not. You can climb over the rubble to reach the altar room. Leanna stays behind to watch your back, while you vanquish the orcs guarding the altar.



Tip

Stealth skills can help you bypass a lot of the temple guards or set you up for instant surprise kills.

At the top of the rubble, wait for the orc patrols to walk out of sight (or face away from you) and then scramble down the rocks to your left. You can hide in shadows and launch a surprise offensive from the pillars. Use one of your daggers or swords to cut apart the orc who comes the closest, then switch to a staff to battle the remaining crowd. A few good pokes evens the odds quickly, and when you trim orcs down to one-on-one odds, feel free to switch back to an edged weapon to end the fight sooner.

Leanna lifts a stone block and grants you access to a new area of the temple.

Leanna joins you at the altar and explains that she needs to prepare the altar while you activate its power source. She heaves a stone block from in front of a portcullis and gives you a new avenue into the temple.



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Repairing the statue opens a secret compartment in the floor.



Open the portcullis and enter the next room. There are no monsters here, but there is a well-hidden secret compartment. On the far side of the room, a statue lies in two broken pieces. If you can mend the statue, you open the secret area. The easiest method is to break out your Telekinesis spell (or scroll) and hoist the broken piece on the ground back up on its base. The secret compartment reveals a Stoneskin Potion, full health potion, two regular health potions, and a mana potion. You also gain the Superior Naga Silksword.



Two goblins trouble you in the next area.

Leave by the hallway that has the campfire burning along its wall. Fire means living creatures, and you get two goblins in the tall room next door. Because you can surprise them, two goblins don't present much challenge. If you do run into some problems, squash one or both of them by destroying the wooden support at the base of the statue, which causes the massive stone column to come smashing down in the center of the room.

Stand still in the room and look carefully on the right-hand wall as you face the far wall up the slope. You'll see another column supported by planks, and if you have Alertness, the planks will glow blue and signify a secret area. Slash the planks and the column will topple and form a makeshift bridge to the upper level. Cross the column and search the secret chest on

the other side for a quiver of arrows, antidote and full health potion. You can use the lever to reach the upper corridor or retreat back down to the goblin area.



Climb the chain to reach another treasure room.

If you decide to return to the goblin area, at the end of the room, look for the chain suspiciously dangling in front of one of the second story archways. Sure enough, that's your ticket to the upper level. Leap off the obstacle on the left side and snatch hold of the chain. Jump off into the room above for an axe (probably not as good as what you're using) and a locked chest. If you don't have the Burglar skill, don't worry about it; there are only three vials of antidote inside, so no big loss.



From the shadows of the stairs, you can stab the goblins without them realizing what hit them.

Exit the room and head to your right. Stairs lead down to a barricaded entrance. Smash open the

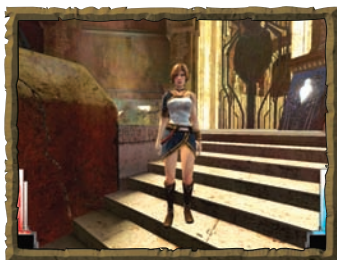
doorway and turn left into the shadows of the next staircase. Two goblins patrol the area and will walk up the stairs on their route (one trailing about 50 feet behind the other). Wait for the first goblin in the shadows and eliminate him with one big attack. The second will probably hear the death scream of the first, but the element of surprise should put you in great position.



A quick rope arrow saves you from the stone slab trap.

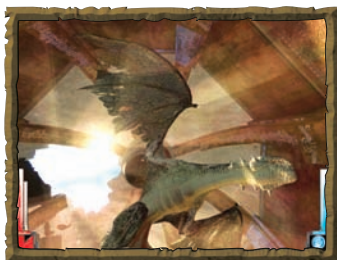
The next room has two exits, one to either side, and a chest settled into the sand. The passage to the left leads you back to Leanna. The passage to the right leads you farther into goblin territory. The chest holds two health potions, a Steel Bar, a mana potion, and the Ring of Might.

Turn right toward the goblins. A long passage runs inside first and then outside over a bridge before heading through an open portcullis and back inside again. It looks innocent enough; however, it's a trap. With Alertness, you can spot the trap on the ground. Step on that pressure plate in the first section and gates slam down in front and behind you and massive stone slabs press together from the left and the right. If you trip the trap, fire a rope arrow up to the top rafter and climb as high as you can. Wait for the trap to close, then open again, then be careful that you don't jump off and hit the pressure plate again.



Return to Leanna for a way around the barred goblin gate.

Continue forward and over the bridge. Goblins slam the portcullis shut when you get close and throw rocks at you through the open bars. You have to find another way through. Return to Leanna and she can help you.



The pao kai breaks through the roof to find you and Leanna.

Leanna doesn't have time to help you, though. The pao kai that you escaped from before still wants you as a meal. It decides to break through the altar room roof and fly in after you. Now you have to fight it.



Lure the pao kai into the side area and slam the portcullis down on its neck.

Conventional weapons won't do much good. Retreat to the side area and through the open portcullis. Draw its attention away from Leanna with a couple of arrows in its snout. When it stretches its neck through the archway and snatches at you, pull the lever and crash the portcullis gate down on its neck. Instant guillotine!



Leanna opens a passage down and around the goblin gate.

Leanna praises you for saving both of your lives, and she figures out a new path. Using her Telekinesis spell, she moves another stone block and opens a passage down beneath the temple again. It might be full of spiders, but it's the only hope you've got.

Along Came a Hundred Spiders

A tremor forces you into a complex spider maze.

Leanna opened up a passage that would have taken you directly where you needed to go. Alas, a tremor hits the area while you're



The Temple of the Spider

traveling down the first section of corridor, and the quake collapses the tunnel ahead. Left with no recourse, you drop down off the manmade corridor and into a maze of disgusting webs.

Straight ahead in the spider maze leads you to a dead end. However, a few steps on your right, a tunnel leads into the first main area. Here you battle two spiders. Any fire spell lights them up, or you can practice your hit-and-run tactics by slicing them and sliding off to the side when they leap at your face.

Listen for the sounds of hissing spiders. You will probably hear them before you see them.

Take a right out of the first area and it trails into a second area with more spiders. Try similar tactics on these spiders, but stay back a bit so they don't swarm you.

A left out of this area brings you to the central womb. Two spiders patrol the area, and depending on which direction you head, you may run into one or both of them.

Your first right sends you on a longer passage that loops back to the starting area.

Your second right out of the central womb takes you down the longest passage in the spider maze. Keep following it until you run into a single spider, and beyond it, an underground stream where the passage forks to the left. A dead orc by the stream has two antidotes (for when you inevitably get poisoned in here) and a Steel Key.



Visit the underground stream before you exit the spider maze.

If you return to the central womb and stand where you first entered, the first passage on the left exits the maze. It winds up and out to the base of the spider pit. But at least the pit's made out of stone.

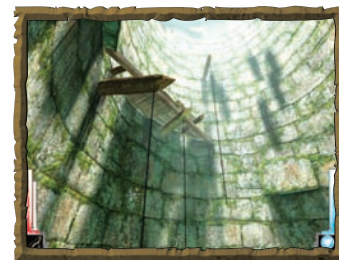
To your right lies the entrance to the spider pit, but if you continue straight you can scoop up some

goodies. A chest at the base of the far wall holds two mana potions, and you can use the Rope Bow to reach a secret area on the ledge above, which contains a second chest with a health potion, a mana potion and an antidote.

Loads of spiders scurry down the wall to greet you at the base of the spider pit.



Get your Rope Bow ready and prepare for some nimble feet and quick hands—you cannot delay long once you enter the spider pit. Loads of spiders pour down the wall to swarm you when you enter the pit. They hound you all the way up; you can't rest for long at any one area.



Use the existing chains and your Rope Bow arrows to reach the top of the spider pit.

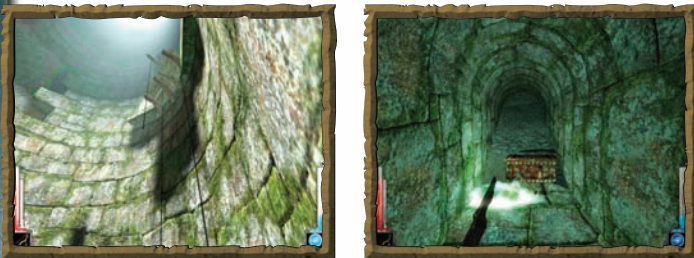
At the bottom, start by running up the broken piece of timber and grabbing onto the long chain. Climb up this chain to the first wooden landing. The alcove ahead contains four items: a Scroll of Fireball, a Stoneskin Potion, a health potion, and a mana potion. If you're surrounded by spiders, you can also back up into this alcove and defend it rather well. As long as you're fast with your sword or daggers, it's not a bad strategy to slash away until all the spiders are dead so they leave you alone on the climb.

The exit from the spider pit is not at the top.

Leave the alcove and fire a rope arrow up to the next highest jutting timber and climb up to the platform with the health potion sitting out in the open. Next, you should see a wood



platform up above with a long chain on its right side. It gets a bit tricky here, as you have to set up a series of three hanging ropes, to jump from one to the next, before you can grab the chain. The chain brings you up to the platform (you navigated its underside with your three ropes) that leads to the exit alcove. Pick up the two mana potions near the edge of this platform.



The top archway gives you access to another treasure chest.

If you're running low on healing potions, you may not want to exit yet. Above the exit platform, there is one last alcove with a full health potion in a chest. Reach it by shooting a rope up to a small platform, and then shooting a second rope to get close enough to the platform's hanging chain.



The drop down out of the spider pit leads you through a few more webs and then to fresh air.

The exit from the spider pit may look like a drop that will kill you, but it won't. You can hop down several ledges to safely land on the ground below.

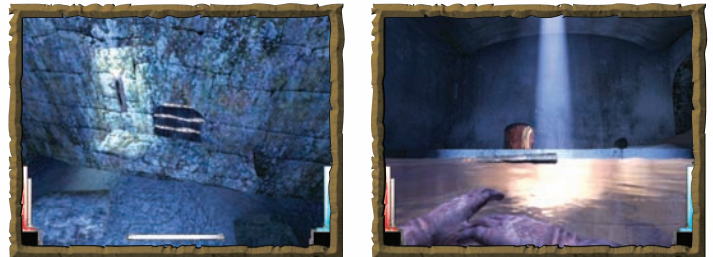


Goblin Showdown



The hole leading away from the spider webs delivers you to a high ledge.

Even though you land in more spider webs, you have nothing to fear from the hairy beasts in the next few minutes. Walk through the spider tunnels—you pass a small underground pond and a great view from between the mountain cliffs—until you hike up to a square hole in the wall. Leave behind the webs and put your feet on solid stone again. The stone eventually takes you to a high ledge with a small window that you have to crawl through.



Flood the compartment so it fills up to the ceiling hole.

It's a long drop. Fortunately, there is water below. Take the plunge and swim to the bottom where you'll see a lever by a grate. Pull the lever to flood the compartment. Normally, you don't want more water rushing in; however, this time it helps raise the water level high enough to access a second small window that enables you to sneak into the goblin warrens.



Duke it out with more goblins.

The Temple of the Spider

After squeezing through the small window, tread the short landing carefully to better spy on the goblins. Below you, goblins guard a room with a treasure chest. Two more goblin patrol a room to your right. Out on the sandy slope ahead, another group of goblins patrols and you have other goblins in the far rooms.

It's a lot of goblins, but goblins are fun to smack around. You only get in serious trouble when you let them team up on you. Sneak attack one of the first goblin groups and keep the fight in the room to avoid arousing suspicion. Turn on your Lightning Bolt spell or sling any of your bows (except the Rope Bow) to pluck off some of the little guys at range. When they swarm, switch to sword or staff and dance around them. Your reward for all the hard work is back in the original treasure room—one mana potion and one health potion in the chest.



A rematch with the goblins at the locked gate leads to a bigger guest.



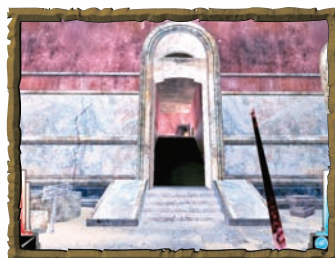
At the bottom of the long sandy slope in the middle of the goblin warrens area, open the chest near the stairs to collect a quiver of arrows and health potion, hop over the landing and down into the courtyard by the locked portcullis (where these goblins threw stones at you in front of the stone slab trap). It's time for some payback.



Aim for the eye again in this cyclops battle.



If you chase one of the goblins to the wall with the big crack next to a statue, the goblin flees into the crack and sets loose a horrible cyclops. The beast crashes through the wall and sends the statue barreling out at you. Stand aside for all this destruction and prepare your standard tactics for cyclops battles—let it swing, backpedal out of its reach, stab it in the eye. A half-dozen good pokes to the eye and you'll have blood spurting everywhere.



The stairs in the goblin warrens leads up to a rich, but trapped, treasure room.



Return to the goblin warrens and find the staircase that winds upward and has a fire on its first landing. Round the corner and head up to the next, larger landing. Watch out for the goblin guards at the top.

A bridge crosses over to another large landing to your right. On your immediate left, the room holds a red pool that magically heals all your damage. The second doorway on the left hosts a treasure chest, but several of the stone tiles leading up the chest are trapped. Skirt around the trapped floor and walk around the trigger zone to open the first chest with a full health potion and two Scrolls of Fire Trap. A small crack in the wall leads into a second treasure chamber with two Scrolls of Fireball, Scroll of Charm, Scroll of Lightning Bolt, Staff of the Firelord, and Scroll of Sanctuary.



Slice apart one last goblin to leave the little critters behind.

Return to the landing and walk over the bridge to the next landing. Straight ahead is a blue pool. This restores mana points, much the same as the red pool did for health.

You can also find another secret compartment by moving the broken statue located on the main concourse. Use Telekinesis to pick up the statue and place it on the pedestal by the door with the Chainmail Armor. Inside the compartment are two full health potions, two mana potions, and a regular health potion.

Exit the room and head to stairs near the mana pool. Go down the nearby stairs and up the ladder near the fire on the landing. Follow the pathway up and outside to a long walk up the mountainside. Pick up the Gutting Kriss in the chest before you exit.

The Crystal Chamber



Watch for an orc ambush on the first mountain staircase.

Your exit from the goblin warrens takes you back into orc territory. The orcs have built houses and structures up the side of the mountain, and to enter the Crystal Chamber at the top and turn on the power Leanna needs, you must pass through all the orcs.



Fight or Freeze your opponents.



At the first staircase, you spot a single orc at the top. This is a ruse; don't be fooled. The true threat is the four orcs on the ledge above the stairs (over your head as you pass under it). While you engage the one orc at the top, the others drop behind you for a big ambush.



You can even roll barrels down on the ascending orcs.

You have several choices out of this predicament. You can fight, using every tool at your disposal, from slicing to dodging to kicking orcs off the side.

You might also try some spell power. Freeze works particularly well. Not only can you stall attackers by turning them into icicles, you can also create a slippery patch, where they slide down the stairs or right off the edge. Finally, you can rush up the stairs to smash the support holding the barrel shelf. These barrels roll down the stairs, trapping or killing orcs underneath them. It's a simple mop-up job after that.



Remove the orc guarding the elevator room.



Pick up the health potion beneath the barrel shelf as you continue, and watch for a new orc on the platform around the next bend. Shock him with lightning or assassinate with an arrow from hiding.

The Temple of the Spider



The battering ram breaks open a secret stash.



Ascend a bit and kick open the planks sealing off the next area. The cavern area holds a battering ram and the elevator that takes you to the Crystal Chamber. Alas, the elevator isn't on; you'll have to remedy that. In the meantime, get behind the battering ram and give it a few big pushes. Its mighty weight smashes through the nearby wall and exposes a secret treasure chamber. Four potions line the walls: Stoneskin, Full Health, mana, and an antidote. The chest in the center holds another mana potion and the Lightning Daggers.



A perfect shot snaps the rope bridge and sends the orc guard to his doom.



The orcs have built a fortified area around the next bend. Platforms connected by rope bridges run along a lower and upper level. One guard patrols the upper rope bridge and a few more on the lower. From your corner spot, call upon your Elven Bow (or Long Bow if you don't have a high enough skill yet) for a sniper shot. Either ping the orc in the head or aim for the ropes holding the bridge. An arrow through the ropes breaks the bridge and sends the orc tumbling to his doom below.



Continue your assault up the mountainside.



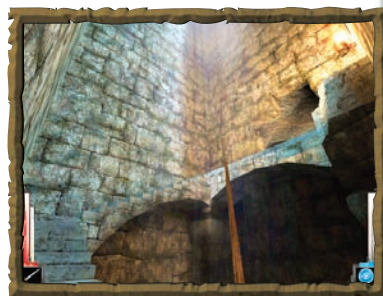
Return to your climb up the mountainside. The stairs and landings weave up to a second elevator entrance (you can spot red stonework on the white cliff face near the elevator). Another orc patrols this spot. You can kick him down the shaft or battle it out with weapons. His companion patrols a short distance up the next set of stairs, so the longer you fight, the more likely you'll have to deal with the second orc at the same time.



To go up, you must use ropes and your sword blade.



Cross the lower bridge and surprise the orc guards around the corner. After you dispatch them, you can try the upper rope bridge if it's not already destroyed. The safer approach is to cross back to your original sniper spot and use your Rope Bow to stick an arrow in the tree growing near the upper platform. Multiple orcs may defend this area, so don't charge blindly up the stairs, and use your kick to send them over the edge.

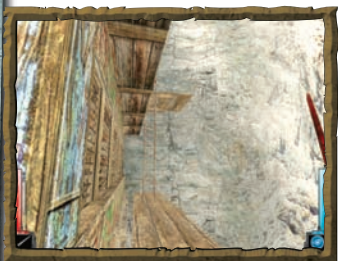




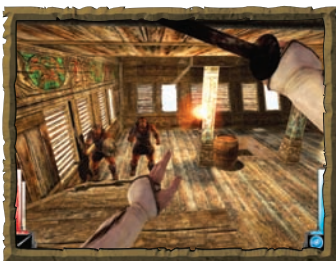
Cut down the orcs at the first house.



Navigate up the stone stairs winding up to a hole in the mountainside. You cut through the mountain and end up on the other side where orcs have put up a series of houses. Four orcs patrol the lower level of the first two-story house. Catch at least one by surprise with a backstab or a stab out of the gloom. Dodge and melee with the remaining three, but be very careful you don't slide off the edge in combat. If you end up too close to the side, fight back into the house where you have the walls for comfort.



Greet two more orcs in the house's upper story.



Two more orcs wait on the upper story. You can reach them by walking around the house's narrow ledge and accessing the ladder on the far side. A square hole cut out of the floor allows one to drop back down to the first floor; you can use that for extra room if the fighting initially goes bad. Pick up an extra Arcane Robes on the second story.

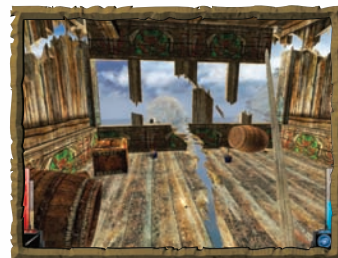


A short spider tunnel connects you back on the mountainside.



Follow the path up over the roof of another building and into a spider tunnel that winds through the

mountain. Compared to the spider maze, this one's cake. Four spiders call it home, but it's a very short distance with no turn-offs. Defeat the spiders and you gain a health potion, antidote, and food rations caught up in the webs.



Get off the shattering house as soon as you can.

Caution

You may be tempted to snap up a scroll or potion in the shattering house, but don't. You will die if you remain in the house a second longer than you must.

The spider tunnels let you out on a roof with four planks nailed shut over a trap door. Break open the planks, drop down into the house, and run for the platform out the open door. Ignore the scrolls and potions for the safety of the solid platform out the door. The house is falling apart, and as soon as your weight hits the floor it begins to crack wide open. A few seconds after you land, the whole building falls off the cliff.



The men of Menelag's last mission died to orcs and spiders.

Head into the mountain through a short tunnel and out into the next house with the tattered ceiling. A spider creeps around on the second floor, and if you want to brain it, you can gain a mana potion. Otherwise, take the planks up to the next house.

From the dead bodies and notes around this room you realize this was Menelag's men's last stand. They died from the relentless attacks of orcs and spiders. Pick up the food rations and mana potion scattered about the room. You can read up on demons in the one tome and the last fate of Menelag's men in the log book.

The Temple of the Spider

Don't forget the Ring of the Phoenix lying on the floor in this room.

Use the mountain forge to craft a new sword.

Follow the tunnel up to the wooden staircase, then climb those stairs to a corridor. The passage to the right brings you into the gear room.

Slide the bolt to activate the gears and bring the elevator back alive. The passage to the left leads to another forge, where you can pound a new sword into shape if you have the special metals to do so.



The gears start the elevator back up.



Return down to the bottom of the mountain and enter the elevator room (near the battering ram). Grab the health potion and then pull the lever for the elevator to clank on down. Step into the elevator and pull the lever again to go back up.



Ride the elevator up to the top and deal with the spider infestation.

The elevator takes you to the very top of the mountain. Several spiders have taken up residence, but you've been killing these for so long now, you shouldn't even need an antidote



potion anymore. The dragon crate in the first room holds two antidotes, food rations, and four Scrolls of Fire Trap.



Open the gates to the Crystal Chamber.

Continue down the corridors until you reach a small room with a barred portcullis. Switch the lever to enter the next room and cross to the far side. Flip the next lever and you extend a bridge into the Crystal Chamber.



Juice up the power source with the object you've been holding since this quest started—the Shantiri Crystal.

Now it's time to use the Shantiri Crystal at last. Plug it into the power source and get out of the room fast. If you don't bolt, the room's expanding energy will kill you.



Defeat Aratrok in one-on-one combat to leave the chamber.

Of course, running doesn't get you out of danger. Orcs enter the room you just came from, and they bring their leader, Aratrok. He tells you that if you beat him in melee combat fair and square, you are free to go.

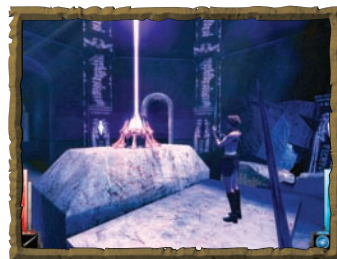


If you cast any magic or cheat in any way, Aratrok's guards join in on the fight.

That means you can't use any magic or pull out any dirty tricks. It's a good old-fashioned melee battle, which by this time, no matter how tough Aratrok thinks he is, you should have quite an edge. Aratrok is strong, so don't get in close. Rather, sweep and stab at him from a distance and take your counterattacks when he lunges at you. If you get low on life, use a potion or cast Heal to survive. Yes, this violates the agreement and sends Aratrok's orc guards into the fight too, but it's better than dying earlier.

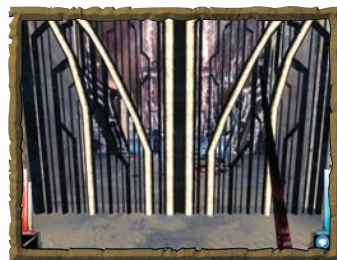
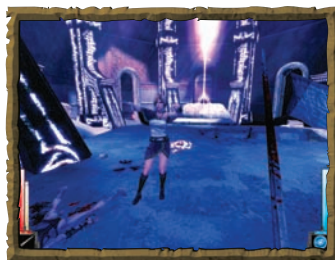


Eventually, you leave Aratrok or all the orcs in a bloody pool. Grab the Spider Key and open the nearby door with the spider-shaped lock. This takes you to a shortcut elevator that brings you straight down to the altar room area.



Protect Leanna as Arantir's ghouls enter the altar room.

Leanna is busy dealing with the power you've suddenly flooded the altar with. Too busy, apparently to notice that Arantir's ghouls have arrived. Fight off the ghouls so that Leanna can complete her tasks. She opens the huge gate behind her and asks you to go first while she holds it open. You have no choice. Go ahead and stand on the other side of the gate.



Leanna lifts the final gate for you to escape, but Arantir catches her.

Leanna tries to follow. Arantir won't let her. He arrives in time to slam the gate shut and batter Leanna to the ground. He has some strong words for you, even as you wish you could open the gate between you and have at him. The rematch will, however, come later.

The Altar of the Skull

Chapter Objectives

- Find information that explains how to access the Skull of Shadows.
- Find the Skull of Shadows and escape from the crypt!
- Find the death jewel called "The Soul of the Crone" under the tomb of He Who Waged the Wars of Blood.
- Find the fate stone called "The Maiden's Eye" in the walls of the crypt.
- Find the life gem called "The Matron's Heart" with a fallen prophet.
- Return the Soul of the Crone to the spider statue.
- Return the Maiden's Eye to the spider statue.
- Return the Matron's Heart to the spider statue.
- Defeat the spiders to obtain the Skull of Shadows!
- You have found the Moonsilk Crystal. Return it to the spider statue and insert the gem in its head.
- Find the Moonsilk Crystal to open the entrance to the crypt.
- Defeat the lich.



Note

Weapon of Choice

Sword of the Disciple: Multiple weapons will do against the primarily undead level. The Sword of the Disciple stands out for its sheer sharpness and cutting power.



Note

Spell of Choice

Fireball: The mass-damage, area-effect blast can hurt a group of foes. In the tight confines of the temple corridors and small rooms, Fireball usually hits everything.



Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Moonsilk Crystal	Skull Temple entrance	In the back room above a sarcophagus
Chainmail Armor	Maiden's Eye area	In the sarcophagus past the double-trap corridor
Combat Staff	Maiden's Eye area	On the main pedestal in the room before the sewers
Maiden's Eye	Maiden's Eye area	On the high wall in the room before the sewers
Sword of the Dragonclaw	Soul of the Crone area	On the sarcophagus in the gear room
Soul of the Crone	Soul of the Crone area	In the lich's sarcophagus
Staff of the Firelord	Soul of the Crone area	In the alcove behind the lich's sarcophagus
Ring of Regeneration	Matron's Heart area	Resting on small altar near the long ramp in the Matron's Heart room
Skull of Shadows	Spider Throne area	In the chamber after you unlock the Spider Throne

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Zombies	Holy	Skull Temple Entrance
Zombies	Holy	Maiden's Eye Area
Ghouls	Holy	Maiden's Eye Area
Zombies	Holy	Soul of the Crone Area
Ghouls	Holy	Soul of the Crone Area
Lich	Holy	Soul of the Crone Area
Ghouls	Holy	Matron's Heart Area
Spiders	Fire	Spider Throne Area

The Spider Throne



Undead thrive in the dank earth of the temple.



You are forced to travel deeper into the temple alone. The passages lead you down to a gaping hole in the ground, and that hole drops you down near your next goal—the Spider Throne.

Tumbling sarcophagi end two zombies' existences.



Zombies infest the entrance to this section of the temple, and, in fact, most of the temple around the Spider Throne. They move slowly and can be dodged easily. To prevent them from resurrecting, you must hold a power strike move above a downed zombie and impale the undead to finish it off permanently. In the entrance area, you can also shatter the long support to the wooden rafters above and crash a pile of sarcophagi on the first two zombies. That makes two fewer zombies that you have to deal with in the room.



A dust cloud on the ground reveals a zombie before it pulls itself out of the earth.

An antidote hides in the green vase on the stairs. Watch for zombies that pop up around the room. Whack them as they rise to their feet for some free shots, and impale them as they fall to cut down on the battle time.



Recover the Moonsilk Crystal in the back room to the left of the entrance.

A small back room is partially hidden midway down the narrow corridor left of the entrance. Beware of the fire trap on the floor; avoid it by throwing a rock or vase at the trap from a safe distance away. Enter it and beware of the fire trap on the floor. Retrieve the white gem above the sarcophagus. You have just found the Moonsilk Crystal, the first gem that helps unlock the Spider Throne. Keep it in your inventory and break the green vase in the small alcove above your head for another antidote.



The Rope Bow elevates you above the entrance to the hidden Spider Throne.

March over to the sealed portcullis (opposite the entrance hole) and look up. You are in a very tall room with some overhanging wooden rafters. Fire a rope arrow up to the most prominent rafter and haul yourself up.

Sure enough, there's a whole new section of the room up here. You can gain some more potions from among the rafters, but the real prize sits on the dais above the rafters—the Spider Throne.



Activate the Spider Throne with the Moonsilk Crystal.



Walk around to the Spider Throne's front and read the inscriptions. It speaks of three gems—the Maiden's Eye, the Soul of the Crone, and the Matron's Heart—which are hidden inside the temple, and, when

The Altar of the Skull

assembled with the Spider Throne, unlock the final gateway to the Skull of Shadows. Plug the white Moonsilk Crystal into the head slot in the Spider Throne; the whole base rotates and the Spider Throne fires a laser that opens the door to the three other gems.

The Maiden's Eye



Rip through the first zombie in the Maiden's Eye area.



The Spider Throne opens a door that leads into a small chamber with a sarcophagus and locked chest to the right of it. A zombie immediately rises from the grave in front of the sarcophagus. Slash at it a few times to stun it and drive it back. When you have enough damage to knock it down, impale it to turn it into the sparkling lights that the undead vaporize into when they're really dead. Above the sarcophagus rests a Superior Naga Silksword. Inside the locked chest is a Stoneskin Potion, and you can find a mana potion on the floor and another up in the rafters.



Look for the secret treasure alcoves throughout the temple.

If you go right, you run into two zombies. Break the vase in the corner for an antidote. If you go left, look for the tall wall with the missing stone blocks. If you stand still for several seconds and have the skill Alertness, you can spot a secret compartment to the lower right. Add the full health potion it contains to

your inventory. A dangling chain in the area leads up to the top ledges, where you can destroy a green vase to claim a mana potion.



Tip

Zombies can spawn from anywhere. If you're low on health or want to reach the gems quickly, stick to the most direct route and avoid exploring every corner.



More zombies shuffle toward you in the next chamber.

Two more zombies rise from the ground ahead. After you dispatch them, you can cut the rope on the wall ahead (a well-placed arrow should do the trick) and duck out of the way as a large chained block swings down and destroys the wall to grant immediate access to the sarcophagus room. Otherwise, turn right into the larger chamber with the slope running up the back end. Two more zombies meander toward you at their clumsy pace. The only thing to worry about as you bob and weave around them is a spike trap near the left passage. You can head up the slope and search for another secret compartment on the ledge if you want to stock up on a magic mushroom.



Avoid the traps as you search for the Maiden's Eye.



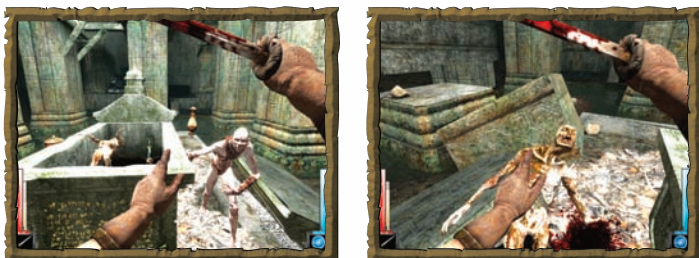
You might take a claw to the stomach or catch a whiff of poison gas from the zombies. If you do, rest up after the fight and prepare to tiptoe past two traps in the left passage. First up is the spike trap near the main chamber (that you so carefully avoided while fighting the zombies, right?). Stay to the right to step by the trap and then pull yourself over the rubble. The second trap lies at the base of the rubble. Leap off the edge of the rubble and over the second trap to reach the next chamber.

In case you want to upgrade your armor, possibly at the expense of extra mana or stealth skills, Chainmail Armor rests in the chamber's sarcophagus. You can also pick up a health potion and Stoneskin Potion nearby.



The sliding stone door leads into a large central chamber full of zombies and ghouls.

Pull the lever near the second trap to open a giant stone door. The new passage opens into the largest chamber in the Maiden's Eye area. You have a central dais with a sarcophagus resting on top of it and stairs leading to ledges on every side. The water pool surrounds the central dais like a moat.



Clear the area around the main sarcophagus.

Advance on the central sarcophagus. Concentrate on the ghouls first; they move faster, and you will have time to deal with the plodding zombies in a moment. Stay on the dais as best you can while fighting the zombies. It's even worth taking a shot from a ghoul; the alternative is taking more from a trap.



You can find hidden goodies in the rafters or sealed tombs.



Deal with the zombies next. One rises from the central sarcophagus and others converge from the sides. Again, stick to the dais while power attacking and kicking zombies away. Use the traps against the dim-witted zombies. They approach you in a straight line; if you position yourself between a zombie and a trap, kaboom!



Use whatever you've got on hand to get rid of the zombies barring your way.



You can pick up another Poison Kriss in the sarcophagus and an antidote in the locked chest next to the sarcophagus. A secret compartment on the left side (if you're standing at the entrance) holds a full health potion and can be reached only with rope arrow and a long reach. A magic mushroom sits up on the corner rafters.



Leave the central chamber via the corner passage.



Once you've cleared the large chamber, look for the corner exit near the glowing green spider light. The passage leads to the Maiden's Eye room.

The Altar of the Skull



Keep on the move against the zombie horde ahead.



Don't stir up trouble yet. Survey the room for some obstacles that can help you clear out the eventual zombie horde. First, you can knock down the statue to the left of the entrance and flatten anything under it as the stone collapses on the dais. Second, you can cut the rope on the left side of the room, which releases a deadly battering ram that swings back and forth—great for zombie smacking! Third, you can stand back and let rip one of your own Fireball spells to blast zombies to smithereens. If you constantly watch the zombies' positions, you can also spring the spike traps against them.



You can smash through the zombies with the battering ram or a few fatality moves.



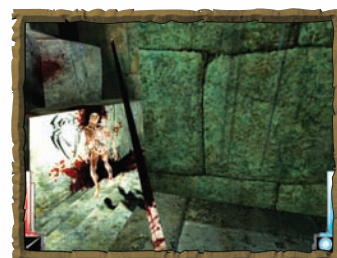
Rely on a combination of those moves to wipe up the zombies. Collect the Combat Staff and a health potion on the center dais (after the battering ram runs its course), and then look to the rafters again for the ideal spot to stick a rope arrow in the ceiling. You want the rope to drop down midway between the dais's edge and the far wall. Make a running leap for the rope and scoot up to the top to pry the yellow Maiden's Eye from the wall.



A good shot with the Rope Bow will bring home the Maiden's Eye.



The Soul of the Crone



The staircase below the Maiden's Eye leads to a concealed zombie and ghoul.

After you secure the Maiden's Eye in your inventory, slide down the rope and fall down the short distance to the stone steps below.



Follow these until you run into three zombies combing the hallways leading down to the bottom level. Defeat them. At the bottom level, stay on the far side of the room opposite the short wall on your left that divides that side of the room. On the front half of this wall, a zombie jiggles toward you at the first sign of human flesh; a ghoul remains hidden on the other side. Standard precautions should get you through both of these creatures as long as you know they're coming.



Go up to gain the Sword of the Dragonclaw and set the door gears in motion.



From the ghoul's cell, aim your Rope Bow at the wooden support high above. Climb up your new rope and enter the small room near the top. On the sarcophagus, pick up the Sword of the Dragonclaw. It's an awesome holy sword that rips through the undead; however, you aren't exactly holy enough to use it yet. Later in the game, should you choose to pursue a more divine role, you can wield it. Don't forget the mana potion on the floor.



Race down your rope and through the closing stone blocks before they shut you out.

Pull the lever in the room and race back down your rope. The lever opens stone blocks near the ghoul's cell, but only temporarily. You have about 10 seconds to safely pass through the door before it begins to close again.



The next room may look clear, but you know those zombies are lurking beneath the soil.

More zombies infest the dirt in this next chamber. Also beware of the three spike traps around the room. You can wade into the zombies with your sword, or back up and let them have it with a Fireball special. Cut up in tiny pieces or roasted—you don't really care as long as they stop moving.



Avoid most of the water zombies by cranking the room's winch and escaping through the portcullis.

On the far side of the room, the slope drops down into the beginnings of a sewer system. If you test the waters, more zombies spawn and attack. You can escape the extra punishment by finding the winch on the room's left side. Crank the winch as far as you can and it opens the portcullis leading into the sewers. Release the winch and rush under the portcullis before it closes.



Hack through the zombies guarding the secret shaft to the lower level.

Continue along the waterway until you reach the single sarcophagus in the water with the clickable cover. Near the sarcophagus is a statue that can be put back in its place. Use telekinesis to do so and a secret area is revealed. Zombies spawn in the water depending on where you step; keep moving so they don't grab your legs underwater and slow you down. Hack at them and pay attention to where they fall. Sometimes it's hard to find them once they sink under the water, and they rise back up if you don't impale them. As soon as you have a moment, push the cover off the sarcophagus and jump down the shaft to the lower level.



The Altar of the Skull



Follow the wall until you see the fallen timber area and can evade the rest of the water zombies.



More water breaks your fall. You enter another sewer maze. Stick to the left and look for a passage that has a fallen piece of timber and a connecting passage that leads off to the left. At this point, if you don't feel like bashing any more zombie heads, you can run for it and they'll never catch you. If you feel like gaining some more loot, climb the fallen timber and look for mana potion, two antidotes, a Scroll of Charm, and full health potion, as well as another mana potion on the earth pile in the left passage below.



Standing on the platform at the Soul of the Crone tomb frees the lich and reveals the purple gem.

The passage eventually opens into a large chamber on your right (two doorways on the right wall both lead into it). Take the stairs leading up to a sarcophagus embedded in the wall and stand on the platform directly in front of it. If you're low on mana, smash the nearby green vase and nab another mana potion before you do this.

Standing on the diamond makes the sarcophagus protrude. You see the purple Soul of the Crone gem inside; alas, the lich rising from the same sarcophagus doesn't like you looking at it.



An army of undead protects the lich.



The lich conjures a zombie army to battle you. As the lich's Lightning blasts and Freeze rays fly, you must somehow dodge them and swat away zombies. The lich can also heal, so don't think you can hit the undead lord and run. Your best course is to hack apart the zombies and build up adrenaline. When you hit fatality level, go after the lich and try to skewer it with a single deadly jab or swift beheading.

Slay the lich with a fatality up close.

Once the lich dies and its zombies fizzle, grab the Soul of the Crone out of the sarcophagus and crawl into the alcove behind it. A Staff of the Firelord stands against the wall, and you can find a mana potion, Scroll of Fireball, and Scroll of Lightning Bolt in the chest. The chain running up the long chimney brings you up to the final gem.



Snag the Soul of the Crone from the lich's sarcophagus.



The Matron's Heart



Climb up the shaft behind the lich's sarcophagus to discover the Matron's Heart chamber.



At the top of the chain, jump off into a corridor lit by greenish light. Follow the corridor to an intersection room where you can go up or down. Down leads to a closed gate; up leads to the vast Matron's Heart chamber. Slay the single shambling zombie here before you opt for the stairs.

Ghouls flood the entrance to the Matron's Heart and claw at you relentlessly.



When you arrive at the platform at the top of the stairs, slow down and draw your weapon. Ghouls will attack inside the

entranceway to the Matron's Heart. Slice at anything that moves, and remember that ghouls cling to walls and ceilings—they can attack from any direction!

As soon as the ghoul shrieks die down, survey the room. On the right side of the entrance, collect a mana potion and an antidote. On the left side from the entrance, stairs lead up to a narrow corridor, a long ramp runs almost the length of the chamber, and a set of stairs wind down to a small area. The small area at the base of those stairs holds a Ring of Regeneration on a pedestal and a health potion in the vase to the right.



A giant leap into the bottom pool lands you next to the Matron's Heart.



You want the narrow passage on the far left. Follow this to the second alcove on your right. If you look down, you'll spot a wooden platform with an open sarcophagus on it. A suit of Chainmail lies amid the bones in the sarcophagus. Carefully slide around the edge to the top left corner and stare into the long, long drop. See that glow? It's the Matron's Heart next to a small but deep pool. Fall off your perch and aim straight at the middle of that pool for a perfect 10 splashdown. Swim ashore and grab the third gem in its stone box. Recover the mana potion to the right of the Matron's Heart box.



You need another giant leap to escape the Matron's Heart chamber.

How do you escape this room? Climb the chain on the other side of the pool and use the lever on the landing to open the portcullis. Climb the steps back up to the entrance that you originally took into the top platform. Run down the long ramp at full speed and leap for the short ledge with the closed portcullis. The nearby lever opens the gate and lets you back into the original entrance room where you discovered the Moonsilk Crystal. You only get one shot at this, so make it count. As soon as you hit the edge, a portion of the ramp crumbles into the pool below. If you miss the jump, you can return to the top level via a portcullis gate and then make the jump from the corner of the platform you used in your dive into the Matron's Heart pool. Use ropes from your Rope Bow to ensure you land on the exit platform safely.

The Skull of Shadows



All three magic gems power up the Spider Throne and open the final door.

The Altar of the Skull

Retrace your steps to the Spider Throne and plug in your three gems. One by one they light up the Spider Throne, and together open the door to the Skull of Shadows.



Spiders and more spiders defend the Skull of Shadows.

As you approach the large statue inside, it threatens you for intruding on this sacred ground. Xana argues that the Skull is rightfully yours anyway, but her protest is quickly drowned out by the hiss of many, many spiders.

One spider bite brings on poisonous delusions, and you have spiders jumping at you from every side. Keep moving! If you stand still, you're dead. Circle constantly so the little buggers can't home in on you. Cut away at them where you can, but don't line up any high-damage shots. Think defense first or the spiders will gradually eat your health total away. If you need more antidotes, there is one on the other side of the main dais in the green vase.

At long last the Skull of Shadows is within your grasp.

When the last spider leg stops twitching, hop up on the pedestal and grab the prize you've been working for this whole time—the Skull of Shadows.



Your revelation dreams of your demon father are rudely interrupted by Arantir.

The Skull flashes a dream—or a memory deeply embedded in your subconscious—of your demon father. He urges you to use the Skull to free him from his prison and stand at his side while you enslave the world.

Taking possession of the Skull of Shadows, Arantir shows no mercy and kills you.



Whether you choose that destiny or not is for another time. Arantir, who has a knack for showing up at the wrong time, appears in time to magically rip the Skull of Shadows from your hand and repel you backward. You land with one of the protrusions from the statue's base thrust through your back and out your stomach. As your life ebbs away, you hear Arantir's condemnations and know that you have failed on your quest.



Fire in the Blood

Chapter Objectives

- Find the exit and escape.
- Recover your lost gear.
- Escape from the giant worm.
- Find your way to the upper part of the pit.
- Fight or sneak your way through this goblin cave.

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Lightning Shield	Cavern entrance	In secluded cave reached by swimming underwater
Your Backpack	Jail	Scale bars from top ledge to reach chest
Flamegold Bar	Jail	Inside backpack chest
Shadowsteel Daggers	Cyclops cavern	On far landing accessible only by ropes and wall platforms
Shadowsteel Daggers	Goblin fortress	In chest on the ground level
Bow of Winter's Breath	High well	On ground by first goblin guard after trolley
Daggers of Frost	Orc fortress	Secret passage in crushing trap
Plate Armor	Forge	Inside locked chest
Shadowsteel Daggers	Forge	Inside locked chest
Earthfire Sword	Forge	Bar in the forge
Lightning Daggers	Cyclops Cavern	In the tunnel leading up to upper level
Earthfire Shield	Goblin fortress	In main room's dragon crate
Ring of the Phoenix	Goblin fortress	In chest on the ground level
Arcane Robe	Lower well	On railing by goblin fortification
Ring of Fire Protection	Lower well	On railing by goblin fortification
Shadowsteel Staff	Upper well	In main corridor

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Orcs	Lightning	Cavern Entrance
Spiders	Fire	Spider Tunnel
Orcs	Lightning	Jail
Orcs	Lightning	Forge
Orcs	Lightning	Cyclops Cavern
Cyclops	Lightning	Cyclops Cavern
Spiders	Fire	Cyclops Cavern (top level)
Goblins	Lightning	Goblin Fortress
Giant Worm	Fire	Goblin Fortress
Facehuggers	Lightning	Lower Well
Spiders	Fire	Lower Well
Goblin	Lightning	Lower Well
Goblins	Lightning	High Well
Spider	Fire	High Well
Orcs	Lightning	Orc Fortress



Note

Weapon of Choice

Lightning Daggers: You can earn the Earthfire Sword early, but it doesn't trigger off orcs and goblins. You have no worries with the Lightning Daggers and its extra charge.



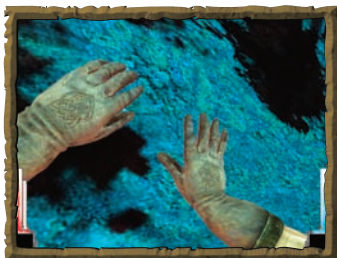
Note

Spell of Choice

Lightning Bolt: Blast those orcs and goblins where it hurts, and Lightning singes anything else that moves too. When fire's not an option, turn to your most electric spell.



Dead Reckoning



Xana saves you from death. Unfortunately, the orcs took your stuff.

You're dead, right? Wrong. Arantir tried to send you to the afterlife, except Xana intervened and revived you even as your body ended up next to the waste heap at the bottom of the island caves. You have been stripped down naked—no armor, no weapons, no nothing. Other than pure survival, your first goal must be to find your knapsack and then reclaim your lost property.

A secret cavern near the entrance holds a suit of Platemail.

A passage leads up to the various orc hideouts. If you decide to go for a swim instead in the waters by the waste heap, paddle out to the farthest point and search for a tunnel under the apparent dead end. At full stamina, dive under and swim through this tunnel to a secret cavern on the other side. The beach inside hides a Lightning Shield, a Stoneskin Potion, and a health potion.



Without a weapon, trick the orcs close to the cliff edge and kick them off.

Back at the waste heap, follow the passage up and look for two orcs standing around a campfire to your right. Off to your left is a side passage that abruptly ends at a cliff overlooking the stone and water below.



Your new demon form gives you another combat option when the odds are in the enemy's favor.



As Xana explained, you now have a demon form. In this demonic incarnation, you can deal heavy damage with your claws or tail; unfortunately, you lose one health a second in this form. The only way to regain health as a demon is to slay something, and since there are long gaps between killings in the caves ahead, you had best use your demon form sparingly.

What do you do without a weapon or when you are low on life? Lure orcs toward you and do a lot of fancy footwork. Avoid their cleaver swings and spin them so your back is to the campfire and their backs are to the cliff drop. Move close to the first orc and give him a swift kick backward. With any luck, he'll tumble over the cliff to his death near the waste heap below. If not, a second kick will finish him, and then you can repeat the maneuver on his buddy.



The orc by the bridge fires arrows at you until you engage in melee.



Head back down to the starting area and search for your dead orcs. If either of them landed on land, you can reclaim a cleaver and orc buckler from the dead body. You are out of luck if they fell in the water. Now you have a weapon and some defense!

Head back to the orc campfire and go through the nearby curtain into the passage beyond. It wraps up to a small chasm that drops down to the waterway. A short bridge crosses the chasm with a lone orc archer positioned to fire upon anyone approaching. Charge up the bridge and engage the orc in melee; otherwise, he'll pelt you with arrows all day long.



To enter the jail, climb to the upper level through the spider tunnel.

Up the next passage, you see light ahead and a large jail cell. Two orcs patrol inside. Don't make a racket; let them continue chatting and walk out the far door in the jail. The doors are locked, so you have to find another way around.



Tip

Remember to pop into demon form for a few seconds if you need a little extra power against a tough enemy.

Walk over to your left and find the passage leading up to the webbed tunnel. Crash through the barricade and enter the spider tunnel. Four little spiders will harass you in the tunnel. A few kicks or swipes of the cleaver eliminate the pests so that you can smash out the other barricade and reach the top ledge above the jail area.



Equipment in hand at last, you can skip out on the jail with a rope arrow.

Cross the wooden walkway and drop into the jail area. In the locked chest hides Plate Armor, mana potion, Shadowsteel Daggers and Scroll of Weakening, and on the table lies another mana potion and a health potion. Open the chest on the floor to recover a steel bar and—

ta da!—your backpack. Now you can start feeling like yourself again.



Your Lightning Daggers can fry the orc jailers.

Equip your Rope Bow and fire an arrow into the wooden support above the far door. Climb over the bars and drop quietly to the other side. You've cleared the jail area, except you still have the two orc jailers to handle. Switch to your Lightning Daggers and surprise at least one of them at the next bend.



Smear the orcs gathered around the forge.

The passage continues to the forge. Another orc group mills about here; switch to a heavier weapon and wade into them with the element of surprise on your side.



With your Ring of Regeneration back on, you can afford to go into demon form longer.

The room's chest had a full health potion, a mana potion, and another pair of Lightning Daggers (in case you missed them earlier). You can also activate the forge and hammer out a sword (depending on the metal bars in your inventory) to add to your growing collection.

Fire in the Blood



Scorch the orcs leading up to the cyclops cavern.



Two more orcs patrol the passage exiting the forge. Smash them into pieces, so long as you don't travel too far away from the forge. At the end of that tunnel is the cyclops cavern, and you don't want to involve that big beast in the fight until it's absolutely necessary.



Get the cyclops's attention with a poison arrow to the eye.



Assuming you kill the two orcs prior to the cavern quickly, you can sneak up on the cyclops and prepare your first attack. The Poison Bow delivers a potent arrow that can disorient the cyclops for a few seconds and enable you to slip into the cavern without fear of a counterattack.



The large, swinging timber can help you bring the cyclops to its knees.



If you fought the cyclops earlier in the goblin warrens area, you know how to handle this one. Apply the same tactics—goad it into smashing down with both hands, backpedal out of its reach, then strike at its exposed eye. You can also slow this big guy down by cutting the rope holding a giant timber on the left side of the entrance. The swinging timber stuns the cyclops if you have him positioned anywhere along

the timber's arc. When the cyclops drops to its knees, jab your sword into its eye and stand back as the blood flows and it finally dies.

Stand back when you finish off the cyclops.



It takes a few rope tricks to reach the cavern's upper level.

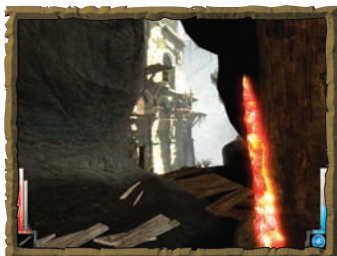
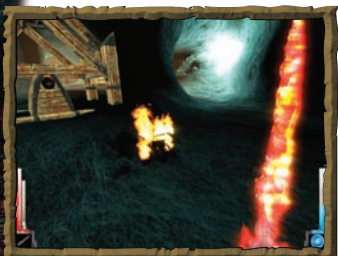
Once the cyclops is out of the way, cross the chamber to the portcullis gate. If you want to score the Shadowsteel Daggers, look to the platforms above the portcullis. Traverse those with the ropes from your Rope Bow and you can ensure the daggers, a full health potion and a mana potion.

If you want to continue on, crank the wheel next to the portcullis and open the gate. Follow the passage and use your Rope Bow to climb up the high shaft. In the upper tunnel, pick up the Lightning Daggers, full health potion and mana potion next to the dead body. When you drop down into the webbed passage, watch out for spiders.

Claim the Shadowsteel Daggers on the hidden perch before you leave the cyclops cavern.



Little Goblins and a Big Worm



Slay the spiders or hike up the path to the orc fortress.

Spiders guard the area, and without much reward in the area, you might as well skip it. Left leads through a series of mineshafts until you jump down a small dip in the passage. Wooden planks on the ground direct you up to the last barricade before you break out into fresh air again.



Take out the goblin scout and sneak into the goblin fortress.

Ahead, across the big divide, is the orc fortress. First, you must survive the goblin fortress on this cliff side, though. Travel up the path to your right that hugs the cliff side. When it levels off, look for a single goblin guarding the structure in front of you. His shield and club will be no match for your sword and combat experience.

On the left side, kick open the barricade and tread carefully down the bridge that crosses another chasm. Arm yourself with the Lightning Daggers and tiptoe into the goblin fortress.



Engage the goblins before they can call in reinforcements.

Around the corner, you spot an elaborate set-up of wooden stairs and platforms. Two goblins probably engage you immediately in the area. You also have a two-goblin patrol to the right near the treasure shed and a three-goblin patrol on the left side near the crisscrossing passages. You want to slay each group before they can call for help from the others. Goblins aren't hard to fight, except the damage can add up if you engage too many at once.



Slip past the goblin by the jail cells and uncover the secret treasure alcove.

Forget about the dragon crate in the center of the room for now. It just holds food rations and an

Earthfire Shield which you should already have. Head past the coffin-like, flat crate on your left and up the stairs that disappear into a dark tunnel. Clear out the barricade and move slowly through the intersection beyond. The passage continues to a "dead-end" alcove, or turns to the right. One or two goblins patrol this right corridor that runs past the orc cell.

If you stand still in the alcove for a few seconds, Alertness reveals a stone slab that you can push to slide open a secret treasure room. Pick up the health potion outside the door and then grab the loot inside—a mana potion, Scroll of Fire Trap, and two Stoneskin Potions.



Butcher the goblin jailor and free the orc in his jail cell.

Fire in the Blood

Return to the intersection and slay any goblins in the passage near the orc cell. The orc asks to be released; grant his wish with the nearby lever. He's mad enough at the goblins for locking him up that he leaves you alone (as long as you stay out of his way) and charges off to cream the nearest goblin. You can watch them fight and clean up after the orc if he fails. The dragon crate nearby holds food rations and a mana potion.



The orc will fight alongside you to escape the stinking goblins.



Scale the wooden ramp by the jail cell and slash through any goblins defending it. You have a winch on the left wall. Release the bolt atop the winch so that a long chain descends to its lowest point. You can now climb this chain to reach the areas above the goblin fortress.



Use the winch and chain to reach the top of the next area.



If you didn't grab the Shadowsteel Daggers in the cyclops cavern, or want to stock up on an extra health potion, mana potion, Ring of the Phoenix, and Stoneskin potion, drop off the ramp by the winch and search the shed below. The chest inside holds the items, though there still could be a goblin or two lurking about.



Goblins are easy to dispatch; the giant worm is not so easy.



The cage chain allows you to exit the goblin fortress. Climb up to the area above the first set of stone stairs just above the wooden platform and leap for the solid ground. If you continue climbing and leap off to the next set of stairs, you can gain another health potion and mana potion loose on the stone.

Follow the passage until you stumble upon the moss-covered stairs and then make another leap of faith into the water below. At the base of this pool, a chest holds a Stoneskin Potion, a health potion, and an antidote. Retrieve them if you can hold your breath long enough to retrieve them.



The cascading stone pillars slide you across the divide and away from the giant worm for a moment.

Follow the passage up to the next intersection and look to the left for one more goblin guard. After the little guy drops, you can continue walking the passage until it spits you out at a plank that juts out like a diving board over another large chasm.

Things get fun now! You must jump to the stone pillar ahead, and your momentum will start it tipping. Jump from pillar to pillar to cross the chasm; a fall results in death.



Watch the worm's bite!

Of course, that wouldn't be too bad. As soon as you touch down on the first pillar, a giant worm rises up to confront you. You must now race through the pillars, ledges, and stairs ahead while battling a giant worm that can swallow you whole.

Jump the pillars and then rush up the stairs on the opposite side. Kick open the barricade on the top level and pick up the antidote on the floor if you're low on poison neutralization. The worm tracks you and shows up at the opening that leads out onto the ledges you'll eventually take. Stay to the back right corner and wait for the worm to lunge in. It takes a bite at you, and when it withdraws, make a run for it.



Run for the campfire and its supply chest.

Go left and run along the ledge. Continuing racing until you see the side cave with the campfire. Duck in here to rest and stock up on the health potion, Full Health potion, and antidote in the chest.



Dodge the poison gas and break for the wooden landing.

Wait for the worm to exhale a cloud of poison—it's angry that it can't grab you with its teeth—and as soon as it dissipates, make another break for it. Continue left and leap for the wooden stairs that rise up to the next stone ledge. There are two alcoves on this ledge. Forget the first—it houses a dragon crate that contains only a health potion, antidote, and food rations; nothing worth risking your neck over.



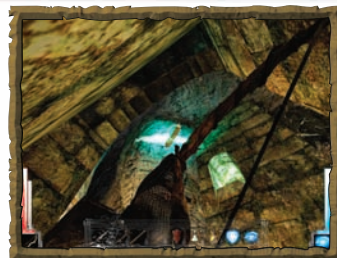
Hurdle the boxes to rest up in the next alcove.

Jump the boxes on the ledge and pass the second alcove. Continue left around the corner, smashing the dragon crate to get through (food rations inside), and slow up.



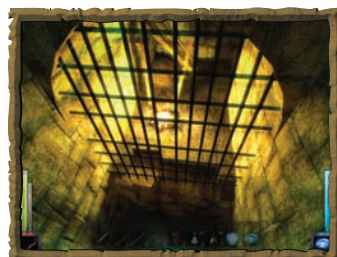
The worm destroys the most direct route, so you must get creative.

You see a long wooden platform. At the end of that platform, the last archway on the left leads to safety. Unfortunately, the giant worm won't let you take the easy way out—if you attempt the long platform, the worm will crash its large body down and splinter the platform to pieces, leaving you a few strides short of success.



Climb up to the high tunnel and drop down into the shaft beyond.

You have to go with the alternate route. Look for a wooden platform overhead and fire a rope arrow that you can scale to the secret tunnel that runs above the long wooden platform area. With the angry worm looking on, climb up the rope, past the wooden platform, and drop off into the tunnel.



Prepare for another long leap of faith.

The worm is none too happy. If you hurry, you can slip inside the passage without the worm whacking you to your death below. The only way out is a long, long shaft. Slide off the edge to ensure that you fall down the center of the shaft and don't hit the side walls.



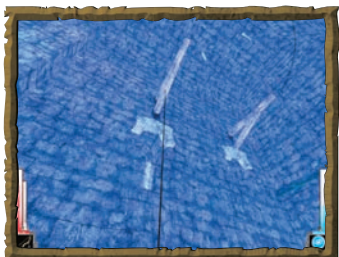
The Orc Fortress



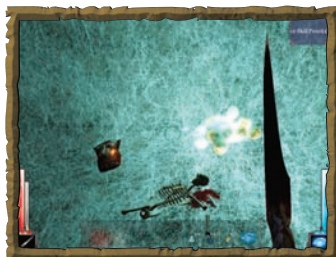
Facehuggers roam the lower well.



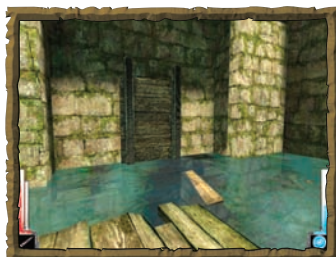
You plunge into a small pool. Swim to the nearby staircase and walk up to the passage above. Hang a right at the next corner and pause at the ledge overlooking the sewer systems in the lower well. Facehuggers soar in and out of the exit at the bottom right and top left. Run and leap into the pool below and climb ashore as soon as you can to battle the facehuggers that spot you.



The secret sewer passage reveals an Arcane Robe and an unwanted lurker.



Before you exit the sewer, fire a rope arrow up to the passage midway up the wall opposite the entrance. Climb and make a left at the first corner. The passage opens into a spider nest with an Arcane Robe next to a skeleton. Slay the lone spider in the nest and grab the armor for future use.



Flood the circular chamber and ride the raft to the top.

Return to the sewer area and exit via the lower passage. Enter the next room and attack the goblin by the raft-like piece of wood floating in the water. After the goblin drops, step up on the raft and pull the wall lever nearby before the room's spiders can swarm you.



Fight off the creatures as the chamber's water rises.

Tip
Don't panic if you fall into the water as it fills in the well. Though the water level rises quickly, you can swim straight up and grab gulps of breath to keep you alive.

The well begins to fill with water. As it rises, stay on the raft and you'll rise with it. The well is full of spiders and facehuggers. Luckily, the water drowns most of the spiders, because they can only cling to the wall. The facehuggers fly, so you have to swat them aside as you maintain your balance on the raft.



Assault the goblin lookout post at the top of the chamber.

The waters finally settle and the facehuggers should all be dead before you move out. Fire a rope arrow up to the top of the platform overhead and climb up to the second landing. Two goblin scouts patrol the platform. Either knock them off into the water where they will drown, or splatter them with your new Sword of the Disciple (Collector's Edition). Climb up to the platform's third level by the rock ledge in the back, which brings you up through the floor to the top level. Watch out for any surviving spiders that may have



scurried up to the top. Collect the Arcane Robe and Ring of Fire Protection on the railing before leaving the area.



A side passage offers up riches.

Head out through the hole in the rock wall and into the mine shaft. A side passage disappears off to your left about 50 feet into the mine shaft. It leads to a small chamber with a spider and a chest with an antidote, Scroll of Fireball, Scroll of Lightning Bolt, and mana potion.



The first trolley wheels you down to a goblin guard.

Back in the main passage, continue left and gain the two Scrolls of Fire Trap and one Scroll of Freeze in the chest up ahead in the passage. Pick up the Shadowsteel Staff in the passage. The outside platform at the top reveals the first of two trolleys that you can wheel up and down the mountainside. The first one descends to a small goblin outpost. Slice apart the goblin, or burn him with a deadly accurate Lightning Blast, and be sure to pick up the Bow of Winter's Breath and a magic mushroom on the ground.



The second trolley lands you next to orc guards.

The second trolley wheels down to the orc fortress. You arrive on the side of the building with little activity, which is good—it gives you time to set up your attack on the perimeter guards.

Wait at the left corner for the first guard to patrol near the corner. Send him hurtling off the edge with a near-soundless kick. A dragon crate on the platform below the stone ledge holds two mana potions, three health potions, and food rations. Go for this only after you've cleared the area of orcs.

Speaking of orcs, two more patrol these stairs near the dragon crate. Maintain the element of surprise and drop these two quickly. A fourth orc guard patrols the corridor leading into the fortress. Either pick him off with an arrow from your top ledge, or wait for him to disappear back into the fortress. The last orc hides out in the far corner on the ledge by the wooden shack.



Inside the fortress, abuse the terrain to your advantage.

The stairs on the stone ledge descend into the orc fortress. Slowly head down these stairs and watch for an orc guard on patrol. The chest in the gloomy section of the corridor to the right holds a Scroll of Lightning Bolt, stoneskin potion, health potion, mana potion, and food rations.

An orc patrols the floor in front of the entryway. Leap off the crate at the end of your corridor and slice apart the orc with a stroke or two. Immediately turn to the rope on the center column's right side and cut it. This drops a swinging timber that can wreck any orcs trying to reach you from this side of the room.



Barrels provide a nice distraction to clean up the remaining orcs.

Fire in the Blood

Move around the room, away from any area where you can get pinned and toward better targets such as an orc's back or a barrel shelf that can make a great distraction. Eventually, continual cuts on all the orcs with your expert use of the environment will leave all the orcs dead on the stone floor.



The secret passage in the orc fortress holds powerful daggers.

The dragon crate in the main area holds three mana potions and a health potion. If you search up on the long wooden platform by the two barrels stacked on top of each other, you will discover a secret area by pressing a stone in the wall's center. You must drop down to the chest, which holds the Daggers of Frost, a Scroll of Fireball, Scroll of Lightning Bolt, mana potion, and a Scroll of Weakening. This is a great find, but don't linger too long; the room is a trap and the ceiling slowly closes down to crush you inside. You have about three or four seconds to grab the loot and climb back out the hole or else you'll end up a pancake.

Sneak up behind the orc guard and then try to avoid triggering the rolling barrel trap.

Find the corner exit with the small arched tunnel. A single orc guard patrols the room beyond. You can either draw him out and ambush him at the corner or sneak up from behind and try a backstab. Take a left and go up the stairs to a room with a gutted wall on the left. Walk right at this corner and stand still.

See that long flight of stairs? Two of the bottom steps are trapped. Step on those and a huge barrel rolls down the stairs to flatten you. Get a running start and jump the trapped stairs. If you miss and hit one of them, continue at full speed and duck into the small alcove on the right side. You have enough time to slip into the alcove and let the barrel roll harmlessly by. The alcove also holds a full health potion and a mana potion.



The dark cavern leads to the outside.

The corridors and passage wind up to a dark cavern with a dead tree on the right and a ledge out of reach above. Fire your handy Rope Bow and lodge an arrow in the dead tree limb. Climb up and follow the passage to the outside world.



To descend to the beach, break out your ropes and jumping ability.

It's a long drop to the beach from here. You must carefully navigate down. Look for another dead tree to your left and fire a rope into the closest limb. Jump out to this rope and slide down to the next ledge. Trace this ledge to its left side and make a running leap to the smaller, moss-covered ledge below.



You meet back up with the remnants of the mission and order them to take you back to Stonehelm.

From here, fire one last rope arrow up at the tree on your left and use this rope to reach the beach. You find a few men and Duncan waiting for you on the original beach. It's been a long journey, you've lost much, but you've also gained the knowledge that Arantir has the Skull of Shadows and plans to unleash a terrible spell on the citizens of Stonehelm. You must stop him at all costs.

In the House of Ashes

Chapter Objectives

- Find a way to enter the necromancers' lair.
- Find Arantir and discover his plans.
- Arantir is absent. Search his room to find out his plans.
- Find a Black Orb to open the door that leads to the laboratory.
- Find Arantir's chamber.
- Escape through the portal.
- Find Leanna (optional).
- Rescue Leanna (optional).
- Kill the giant spider (optional).

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Endless Quiver	Necromancer room	In treasure chest on floor
Black Orb	Stained glass room	Resting on table in front of glass
Soulreaver Staff	Laboratory	Lying on table by glass beakers
Shadowsteel Daggers	Laboratory	On table in side chamber
Plate Armor	Anatomy Room	On table in room
Shadowsteel Armor	Prayer room	In locked chest in side room



Note

Weapon of Choice

Earthfire Sword: If you can't go holy on the necro-fanatics of Nar-Heresh, you might as well wield a sword that sets them on fire and makes you feel at home in the House of Ashes.



Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Black Guards	Fire	Entry Portal
Necromancers	Holy	Entry Portal
Black Guards	Fire	Nar-Heresh Corridors
Vampire Knights	Holy	Nar-Heresh Corridors
Necromancers	Holy	Nar-Heresh Corridors
Acolytes	Holy	Nar-Heresh Corridors
Necromancers	Holy	Necromancer Room
Acolytes	Holy	Necromancer Room
Black Guards	Fire	Library
Vampire Knights	Holy	Library
Necromancers	Holy	Library
Black Guards	Fire	Training Area
Vampire Knights	Holy	Training Area
Necromancer	Holy	Stained Glass Room
Necromancers	Holy	Laboratory
Zombies	Holy	Laboratory
Necromancers	Holy	Prayer Room
Vampire Knights	Holy	Prayer Room
Necromancers	Holy	Anatomy Room
Acolytes	Holy	Anatomy Room
Spiders	Fire	Spider Pit
Giant Spider	Fire	Spider Pit
Black Guards	Fire	Lecture Room
Vampire Knights	Holy	Lecture Room
Necromancers	Holy	Lecture Room



Note

Spell of Choice

Inferno: Think the Earthfire Sword blazes a trail through the minions of Nar-Heresh? Wait till you break out the flamethrower spell and light up crowds.



Into the Bowels of Nar-Heresh

You return to the site where you regained the Shantiri Crystal from Arantir.

When you return to Stonehelm, you naturally look for Arantir at the portal to his stronghold, Nar-Heresh. It's active and guarded by a handful of necromancers and black guards, so it looks like you're on the right track.

Fell the necro-fanatics guarding the portal to Nar-Heresh.

Slide through the darkness and creep up on the nearest guard. You can probably slice through one or two before the others are alerted. Armed with the Earthfire Sword, you can earn some easy kills with its fiery special effects, as well as its heavy damage against unarmored foes such as the necromancers.



Tip

When you ignite a foe with the Earthfire Sword, move on to the next target. Most enemies set aflame will perish without any more effort from you.

The portal sends you into Arantir's stronghold.

Once the portal guards are down, step through the glowing portal and you are transported to Nar-Heresh. Watch for two black guards, a swordsman and an archer, patrolling the entry corridor. Step off to the left side and into the shadows. Walk up to the mid-point of the corridor and ambush the two guards with a sneak attack from the protected space alongside the columns.



Defeat the black guards to stand in the main entrance hall.

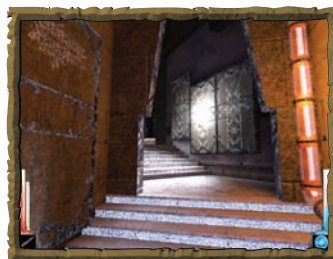
After you beat the two guards by the portal, walk out to the main entrance hall. It's a big open area with long balconies to the left and right. Both paths take you deeper into Nar-Heresh. The right side has an archer and two swordsmen, with little reward, so head to the left.



Quietly eliminate the guards on the hall's side balconies.

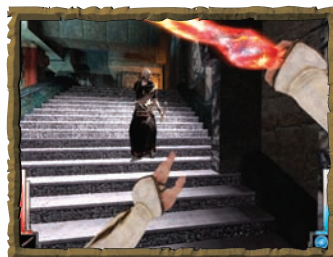
Because the balcony is so long, sprint down it at full speed. You don't want to give the archer guard patrolling the far side a chance at

loading up. Rip through the black guard on the stairs behind him and continue to the black-marble corridor past the entrance hall.



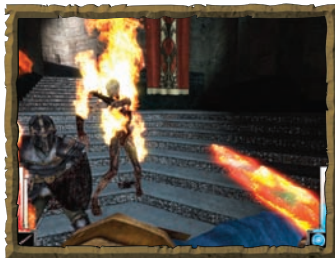
Rush to melee any black guard archers you spy.

Continue to the next intersection, where the corridor goes straight and breaks off to the right. The room off to the right contains a chest with a mana potion.



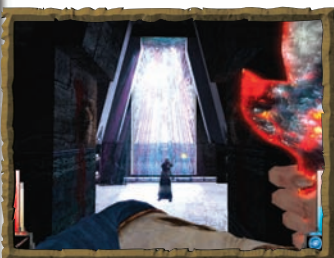
Two more casualties stain Nar-Heresh's stone.

You'll meet some tougher resistance up the corridor and on the next set of the stairs. Charge at the first archer and ignite him with your Earthfire Sword. A black guard and necromancer patrol the stairs and will probably hear your attack on the archer guard. Dodge the necromancer's Flame Arrows and sweep past the second black guard. Bring down the necromancer first with a big swing to reduce the fight to one-on-one odds.



Two more of Arantir's minions fall in the storage room.

Continue forward and follow the corridor to the storage room. A series of barred alcoves line the walls; keep those shut as you seek out the two guards and a necromancer that patrol the area. Kicking an opponent down the many stairs in the area is an excellent defensive tool, and you might break the enemy's neck in the process. Take down the enemy quickly before they can pull the levers in the room and release the four ghouls in the cells. The stairs in the back of the room loop back around to the right balcony in the main entrance hall.



Wade through Arantir's servants in the necromancer quarters to find the Endless Quiver.

Leave the storage area by the door to the right (from the entrance looking into the room). The plaque next to the door reads "To the East Quarters." At the next intersection, go right up the stairs into a necromancer quarters. Destroy the two necromancers who think they were in for a quiet night of settling down. Surprise! The chest in the first room holds a Scroll of Telekinesis, and a mana potion.

Return to the main corridor and go left at the next intersection. You run into two necromancers and an

acolyte. Explode one with fire and slice and dice the other two. A chest in this room gives you the Endless Quiver and a health potion.



Slip past more servants to enter the library.

Leave the room and follow the stairs up to the next corridor. Walk quietly down the corridor and pass the room on your left with the red tapestry draped over the door. Two acolytes live inside. Because you have nothing to lose but some time, you might as well slip by the doorway undetected and follow the passage to the next area, the library.



Mind the books as you burn through the necromancers and black guards in the library.

The library is a multi-tiered chamber with books lining the circular walls and bridges dropping down to the various levels. Necromancers and black guards plague the place. Circle each level carefully and eliminate each group, one at a time. Don't alert the whole place at once. Avoid the bridges until you know the way is clear. If you get stuck out on a bridge, you can get hit by stray necro Flame Arrows or pushed off the side to your death by a black guard. If you're curious, you can read up about necromancy theory in the large tome near the base of the library.



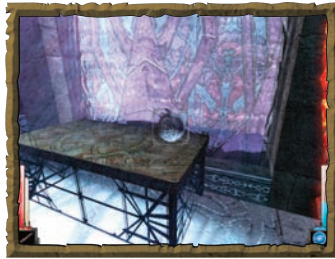
Test the black guards' training skills when they have to go up against live competition.

In the House of Ashes

The door at the bottom of the library exits down a corridor to the training area. Some black guards and vampire knights bat target dummies around in the basin, while a necromancer overlooks on the steps behind. They haven't seen the real deal in action, so drop down and strut your stuff with the sword. Shuffle around between swings to present a moving target for the necromancer and zero in on the spell caster after you cut down the two swordsmen and the archer.



Gain the Black Orb in the room with the large stained glass window.



Find the door rimmed with black marble opposite the entrance area and slay the lone necromancer inside the room. The Black Orb rests on the table in front of the large stained glass window. This is your key to the locked doors in Nar-Heresh and it opens up a whole new area for you to explore.

Discovering Arantir's Plan



Enter the laboratory with one thing on your mind—vengeance for the poor souls being tortured inside it.



Return through the training area and library to the door with the sign that says "North Quarters." It was previously locked, but now you have the Black Orb key. Open the door and trot up the stairs until you reach the laboratory.



Burn the torturers to the ground and don't look back.



In the main chamber, two torturers perform all sorts of hideous experiments—bodies are torn in half, corpses moan at you, entrails litter the floor. Run up to these necromancers and put them down hard for all the suffering they've inflicted. Pick up a Soulreaver Staff sword on one of the lab tables.



The Trap Door Key from the necromancer allows you to bypass some areas through the underground sewer system.



Take the right stairs and enter the side room. A necromancer watches over the cells here, and if you slay him, you gain the Trap Door Key. Through the grate in the floor, you can enter the sewer system below and pop up in various spots around the lab. The Trap Door Key opens the locked bars in the sewer and allows you free access to surprise the remaining necromancers in the area.



The laboratory cells hold a secret area and zombies that look like villagers.



The first cell on the left shows a dead villager lying against a bed. The villager is dead, but the bunk he lies on is actually a secret compartment that hides a full health

potion, an antidote, baked bread, and a bottle of berry juice. The other cells hold what look like villagers, but are actually villagers converted to zombies by the necromancers' experiments. Unless you feel like fighting, leave them locked up. You can pick up Shadowsteel Daggers and three antidotes through the locked door and in the room adjacent to the cell room.



Watch for ambushers near the anatomy hanging.

Return to the lab and exit via the doorway opposite the entranceway. Climb the stairs and walk slowly until you see two acolytes cleaning the hallway. They won't prove any threat, but watch out for the necromancer in the room to the left. He summons forth a zombie to battle you as he hits you with spells. The zombie moves slowly; avoid the undead and take out the necromancer first, then dish it out on the zombie. Gain the Plate Armor on the table and a health and mana potion in the locked chest.



More Nar-Heresh creatures fall in the hallway near the Prayer Room.

Continue down the corridor until you come out on the platform that circles a huge drop into the spider pit below. You hear Leanna calling for help below, so you know you're on the right track. Turn left and take the doorway that says "Prayer Room." You face two black guards and a necromancer on the next set of stairs. Fight through the black guards to get to the necromancer before he can summon too many of his pet zombies.



In the prayer room, wipe out the necromancers with sword or the Inferno spell.

The corridor leads over to a series of cut-out stone windows on your right. These windows peek into the prayer room, where five necromancers meditate in silence. Your best option is to load up your Inferno spell and turn on the flamethrower against the five meditation necromancers. You can light them all on fire if you jump through the stone window and act quickly. When the Inferno drains you of mana, switch to your Earthfire Sword and hunt down the survivors. Back in the main corridor, if you go around the next bend after the prayer room, you can pick up two health potions, a full health potion, and two mana potions. Inside the locked chest is a suit of Shadowsteel Armor, but beware of the explosion trap that defends the area in front of the chest.



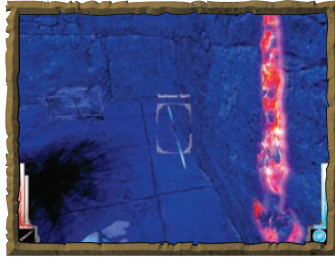
Arantir's secret spills out when you read his diary.

Open the nearby portcullis and follow the corridor. You hear two acolytes talking about Arantir being away. Now's your chance! Wipe the floor with the two acolytes, take the elevator down and follow the corridor out to the area overlooking the spider pit. Turn left and pass the bloodstained steps that descend to the spider pit elevator. The next doorway is Arantir's quarters.

In the House of Ashes



Snag the Soulreaver Staff in Arantir's secret treasure room.



Enter and read the diary at the back of the room. It explains about the Necropolis and how Arantir plans to sacrifice the souls of Stonehelm there to seal the magic gateway with the Skull of Shadows and prevent the demon Kha-Beleth from arriving in this world. You will use that knowledge later.

For now, flip the nearby lever, which opens the doorway back to the entry portal, and grab the full health potion, Scroll of Fire Trap, Scroll of Telekinesis, and mana potion in the back of the room. On the wall opposite the diary, look for a secret lever in the form of a wall sconce. Turn the sconce and a secret treasure room opens. A trap guards the chest, so tread carefully. Inside, you score big: a full health potion, a stonesskin potion, a Scroll of Telekinesis, Scroll of Charm, Scroll of Firetrap, Scroll of Freeze, Scroll of Lightning Bolt, Scroll of Sanctuary, and a Scroll of Weakening.

Womb of the Spider



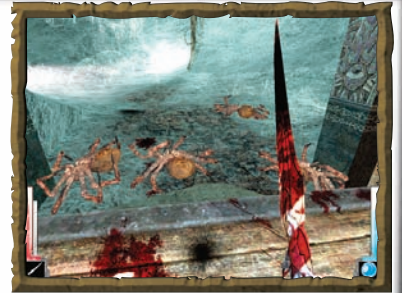
The elevator drops you deep into the spider pit.



The blood trail on the steps next to Arantir's quarters wind down to an elevator. Enjoy the ride down to the spider pit because it's the last moment of calm you'll have for a while.

Inferno fries the smaller spiders in the pit.

When the elevator opens, prepare for a barrage of spiders. One group swarms you at the elevator. Inferno toasts them pretty quickly, or you can rely on the Earthfire Sword. Once the spider hissing stops, find the passage through the web down to the main chamber.



The giant spider can spear, bite, or poison you if you get in too close.



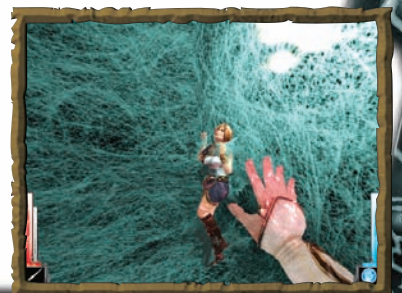
As soon as you enter the main chamber, the big momma spider scurries down the far wall and plops to the ground. It's huge and durable, and it can slap you around with its legs, bite, or poison you. Not to mention it has other monster spiders running around with it as distractions.

Slay the spider with a fatality to the exposed stomach.

Forget the other spiders and concentrate on the giant mother. Its weak spot is its soft underbelly. Continue cutting at it to drive up your adrenaline bar. When it rears up to attack or looms over you when you're not ready to swing, sprint off to one side to avoid damage. Fire hurts it, so use Flame Arrow and Fireball from a distance, and Inferno when it closes in tight.

When you finally reach fatality level, dodge under its legs and stab the giant spider in the underbelly. It will squeal and crash to the ground dead.

Free Leanna if you want her aid.





Caution

Do not cut Leanna free with a sharp weapon. You may hurt her and cause her to turn against you.

On the wide ledge in the back of the cavern, a web cocoon ties up Leanna. Free her. She thanks you and promises to help you out, though you'll have to move slowly because she's injured. Remember: Saving Leanna is optional.



The final guards try to slow you and Leanna.



Return to Arantir's chamber level and go to the doorway marked "To the Lecture Room." Go slowly in the corridor leading up the lecture room. Two necromancers and their henchmen jump you in the intersection before the room. Leanna throws Flame Arrows to aid you from behind, but be careful that no enemies slip by you or they'll kill her in seconds.



The Staff of the Firelord keeps the hordes of necromancers and black guards in check.



Order Leanna to stay in the corridor after you finish off the first enemy group. A few more necromancers and black guards populate the area in and around the lecture room. If the group attacks at once, switch to your Staff of the Firelord to ignite some and stun others. Only when you've cleared the room should you call Leanna to your side again.



Leanna follows while you open all the doors with the Black Orb.



The far doorway leads to a locked door marked "To the Portal." With Leanna following, pull the lever, wait for the elevator to descend, then go inside and ride the shortcut elevator back up to the original floor.



Leanna stays behind to seal the portal behind you.



You come out right next to the portal. Leanna says she must stay behind to seal the portal so no one else can use it. You don't like the idea, but time is running out for the citizens of Stonehelm, and only you can reach Arantir in time to avert disaster.



Note

If you save Leanna, she will tell you to go to the temple of Ylath in Stonehelm, where you will meet Delan. If you kill her or die, you will not have access to the temple, but Xana will be happy.

City of Flames

Chapter Objectives

- Find the Necropolis entrance.
- Find Percy.
- Get Percy to the other side of the plaza guarded by the cyclops.
- Kill The cyclops (optional).
- Find the Sanctuary of Ylath if you wish to purge Xana from your soul.
- Clear the ghouls from the Sanctuary's entrance (optional).
- Bathe yourself in the blessed waters of the Sanctuary of Ylath if you wish to purge Xana from your soul (optional).
- Leanna must survive.
- Kill Leanna (optional).

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Bow of Fiery Rage	Percy's Room	On table near door
Shadowsteel Armor	Sanctuary of Ylath	Outside church on stone table
Daggers of the Dragonfang	Sanctuary of Ylath	Gift for cleansing in the holy waters
Staff of the Dragonbone	Sanctuary of Ylath	Gift for cleansing in the holy waters
Bow of the Dragonbone	Sanctuary of Ylath	Gift for cleansing in the holy waters
Master Thief's Outfit	Patron House	On table in upstairs
Lightning Shield	Patron House	Hanging on wall

Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Necromancers	Holy	Stonehelm Streets
Ghouls	Holy	Stonehelm Streets
Black Guards	Fire	Stonehelm Streets
Undead Cyclops	Lightning	Courtyard
Ghouls	Holy	Sanctuary of Ylath
Zombies	Holy	Sanctuary of Ylath
Zombies	Holy	Stonehelm Streets
Necromancers	Holy	Aqueduct
Black Guards	Fire	Aqueduct
Ghouls	Holy	Aqueduct
Pao Kai	Fire	Necropolis Entrance



Note

Weapon of Choice

Sword of the Dragonclaw: Choose the path of righteousness and there is no better weapon to pound the undead. Otherwise, stick with your Sword of the Disciple (Collector's Edition).



Note

Spell of Choice

Weaken: You've accumulated enough points to choose the best of your high-end spells. Weaken tops the list on the defensive side—enemies will limp around helpless or shrink down to nothing.



Under Siege



You enter a Stonehelm under attack from the necromancers.

Time is running out for the citizens of Stonehelm. Arantir plans to sacrifice them all in this spell to stop the demon lord Kha-Beleth. More immediately, Arantir's minions have launched a full-on assault against the city, which now burns with a thousand fires. Into this chaos, you arrive.



A necromancer kills Duncan, and it's up to you to avenge his death.

From the sewer system that connects the Nar-Heresh portal to Stonehelm, follow the tunnels until you end up at the ladder next to the cowering villager. Climb the ladder up onto the streets of Stonehelm where Duncan plots a defense against the invading necromancers. In a rash act, Duncan charges out against the necromancers and the closest spell caster on the stairs murders him. Avenge his death with a few good sword strokes. If you have Burglar, you can open the locked door where you met Duncan to stock up on some extra potions and food rations.



Ghouls terrorize the city streets at every turn.



Ghouls have taken over the section of streets at the top of the stairs. Their attention is on the villagers, the easy prey running from them, but once you make your presence known, they'll quickly turn on you.

You've dealt with ghouls before. Watch out for their Freeze touch, and remember that they can attack you from any direction—streets, walls, off rooftops. They move quickly, so dodge and weave as you slice at their ranks. Use the terrain to your advantage—kick ghouls into the spiked columns, slash them back into the fires, push them over ledges. Be on constant guard and ghouls shouldn't get the drop on you.



A rope arrow to an open window sneaks you through to the next area.



Once the ghouls are subdued, retrieve a full health potion, health potion, and mana potion from the nearby dragon crate. There are no doors or streets out of this area. Look for the two-story building with the open window, and fire a rope arrow into the protruding wood shaft above the window. Climb up and drop into the room. A health potion, mana potion, and the Daggers of Frost rest in the chest on the floor.



Slay the ghouls in the next stretch of streets.

City of Flames



Smash the barricade out to the exterior balcony and drop down to the new street area. A Stonehelm guard needs help with some more ghouls. Work your magic with the sword and keep at least one more citizen alive in this

massacre. As you head under the Stonehelm banner and up the street stairs, watch for a black guard and more ghouls to make your journey difficult.



Percy will be your guide through the city.

At the landing past the dead black guard and ghouls, Percy, Duncan's brother and your guide to the aqueducts, opens his door and invites you off the street. Arm yourself with the Bow of Fiery Rage in the room. Follow Percy to the main courtyard.

Defeat the undead cyclops feeding on the villagers in the courtyard.



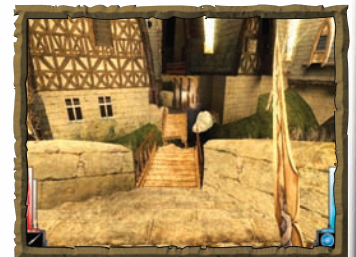
The undead cyclops may grab fleeing villagers and throw them at you. Watch out that the creature doesn't stun you with an unexpected toss.

A mean, old, undead cyclops rips apart this section of the city. Percy can't cross the courtyard until you slay the cyclops. Rely on the same method for beating the other cyclops you've faced: trick the cyclops into a two-handed smash, dodge backward out of the way, and stab at the exposed eye. To heal up or take a breather, duck into the open doorway from which the villagers ran out. With your back to the far wall, the cyclops can't grab you. An alternate strategy is to pick the locks on the house near Percy. It opens to a route through the houses that allows you to avoid the fight.



The roofer clues you in that there's a secret room up above the courtyard.

The cyclops eventually falls in a bloody mess. Before you find Percy, check out the secret area hidden near the roofer on the opposite side of the courtyard (near where you entered). You can fire two rope arrows up into the high beams, and if you've spaced them equally apart, you can leap from the first to the second and then drop on the roofer's platform. The window above him leads into a dark house with a chest that contains two health potions and two mana potions.



Percy leads you toward the aqueduct system, but he can't pass the broken bridge.

When you're ready, Percy waits down the side passage to the right of the broken window where you first spotted the undead cyclops. He guides you through a locked door



and down the streets on the other side to a broken bridge. Get a good running start and leap across. Unfortunately, when you do, the bridge crumbles more and Percy can't follow. He vows to meet you in the streets ahead.



Save the city guard from the band of hungry ghouls.

The street after the bridge leads you down to a cul-de-sac with three ghouls attempting to feast on a lone city guard. Save the guard with your sharp sword skills. You might also want to fire off a Weaken spell or two to soften up the targets. A weakened ghoul limps around, barely able to move, and if you release a Weaken spell at fatality level, it shrinks the ghoul to a tiny, feeble size.

Look for the chain that can carry you up to the crossroads.

After all the ghouls lie dead, smash open the dragon crates for a health potion, mana potion, and some baked bread. Clear the boxes out of the alley to the left of where you first saw the guard and the ghouls. A chain in the back carries you up to the crossroads above.



The Sanctuary of Ylath

You must make a big decision at this crossroads.

Hop off the chain and stand at the crossroads. You make a huge decision here. Right sends you up the hill to the Sanctuary of



Ylath. Inside the church, you can sacrifice Xana and embrace the path of righteousness. If you head left without venturing into the church, you ally with Xana and have to kill Leanna later near the Necropolis.



Note

At the crossroads, you choose Xana or Leanna as your companion for the remainder of the game.



Ghouls assault the holy grounds around the church.

Even if you decide to side with Xana, you probably want the loot outside the church. Walk up the hill and pick up a health potion and mana potion in the wall alcove. Continue up the stairs, through the cemetery and out onto the partially ruined landing. Two ghouls scurry up over the ledge and attack. Dispatch them and you can claim the Shadowsteel Armor and full health potion on the stone bench. The Shadowsteel Armor offers a bonus of four to your armor class and 10 extra health; put that on immediately if you have a skill of Endurance 3.



Sacrifice Xana at the holy pool in the church, but she won't sit still for it.

A priest speaks to you outside and acknowledges that Leanna mentioned to him that you might want to seek the path of the righteous. All you have to do is walk into the church and step into the holy water pool at the far end. Xana screams for you to stop and throws a fiery tantrum, but there's really not much she can do to stop you if you want to sacrifice her.

If you choose to get rid of Xana, you are rewarded with the Staff of the Dragonbone, Bow of the Dragonbone, and the Daggers of the Dragonfang.

City of Flames

More important, you can now use the awesome Sword of the Dragonclaw. The holy sword deals tremendous damage against the undead and Arantir's minions. Considering that the majority of foes you face from now on are vulnerable to the holy sword, it becomes a very powerful weapon.

Zombies rise from the graves in the churchyard.

As you leave the church, zombies clamber up out of the graves in the cemetery. Armed with the Sword of the Dragonclaw, you can explode them with a single hit or two. If you stay true to your demon roots and forgo the holy weapons, you can still pound them down with the Sword of the Disciple (Collector's Edition) or other weapons.



Protect the wounded men from more ghouls.

Going left at the crossroads bring you to a grassy plot where a healer tends to a wounded guard and another guard stays on alert for more invaders. A health potion and mana potion on the stone bench to the right can juice you up. A few seconds after you arrive, ghouls storm the place. Work with the men to defend against the ghouls. The longer you keep the soldiers alive, the less work you have to do on your own.



Fight through the remaining ghouls to reach the house that brings you to the street above.

If the healer or any of the guards survive, they follow you through the rest of the streets in this area. Take the left up the long road and stairs that lead to a short landing and an unlocked door. More ghouls scuttle down the walls to impede your progress. Slash them to the ground or kick them into the spiked barricade on the right wall.

Enter the unlocked door and go upstairs. Turn left and search the bedroom for a mana potion, two health potions, the Master Thief's Outfit, and a Lightning Shield. In the second upstairs room, a trap door above the corner ladder opens into an attic that holds a chest filled with a Scroll of Sanctuary, two Scrolls of Fire Trap, and a Scroll of Freeze.



The villagers may look human, but they're zombies in disguise.

In the back alley, don't be fooled by the villager standing on the stairs that looks like Percy. It's actually one of those villager zombies that the necromancers experimented on. It attacks as you near, as do its three friends at the top of the stairs and around the corner to the right.

Don't swing your sword too quickly! Percy may look like the other villager zombies, but he's all too human.

Purge the zombies from this world and open the door behind the last two. Follow the cobblestone path up the stairs to an area with a broken wheel lying in the street. Percy waits for you around the next corner, so don't start swinging thinking he's a zombie!





To open the aqueduct system, you must battle through the necromancer and his crew by the release valve.

Percy leads you to the aqueduct. He says he can raise the portcullis gate for you, but only if you can find the release valve and flood the waterway. He says good-bye here and points you in the direction of the release valve. You can opt to tail him before you go after the release valve; you'll find two health potions and a mana potion in the winch room where Percy waits.



Show the black guards and the necromancer boss your deadly steel.

The release valve lies behind the wooden door toward which Percy originally pointed. It's a big fight ahead, so ready a Weaken, or your best spell, and hit the necromancer with it as you charge up the stairs. Go after the necromancer's two bodyguards next. Don't let them pin you against the wall; you'll do much better if you can fight past them to the bigger space the courtyard behind offers.



Ghouls come from everywhere, and only when they're all lifeless on the ground can you turn the release valve.



Ghouls also pour down the walls to add to the resistance. Circle the courtyard and aim precise slashes at foe's exposed backs and limbs. Listen for noise; the ghouls give themselves away—they can't keep quiet! When the last one drops, walk over to the corner and turn the release valve until the water floods out.

Sneaking into the Necropolis



Enter the aqueduct gate and wander through the sewers.



Leave Percy and the streets of Stonehelm behind and dive into the aqueduct waterway. True to his word, Percy raises the portcullis gate and you can climb into the sewer tunnels. Follow the tunnel and jump off the big ledge into the pool below. Swim to the stairs that scale up the wall and take these to the outside.



A pao kai waits for you outside the sewer pipe.



The stairs run along an outside cliff wall and deposit you near the Necropolis entrance. First, though, you must solve the problem of a rather large pao kai circulating overhead and looking for a tasty snack.

City of Flames



In a battle of claws versus arrows, the pao kai has the edge.



Use the castle's ballista to down the big dragon.



When the pao kai lifts to a higher point in the sky, break for the archway to your right and run up the stairs inside the castle. In the room overlooking the ocean, you find a fully armed ballista. Load up the ballista and go dragon hunting. A few shots from the ballista sends the pao kai screaming from the skies and you have another kill under your belt.

Gain extra supplies from the balanced baskets.

In the entry room that you ran by to reach the ballista, there are two metal baskets suspended by a chain. The lower one holds piles of wood.

The upper one, which you can't reach yet, contains a full health potion, a mana potion, and food rations. Simply unload the wood from the bottom basket and the weight of the top basket lowers it.



Your run must be perfect to enter the Necropolis doors before they close.

Back up in the room at the top of the stairs past the ballista room, search for the winch that controls the Necropolis doors. You can see the doors out the window next to the winch in the corner. This is not a lock-in-place winch; after you crank it, the winch slowly rotates back to its original position, giving you about 10 seconds to enter the Necropolis.

You won't make it running back down the stairs and out the archway you first came down. There's a faster route. Smash the boards in the corner and drop down to the small room that has a barred door. Unbar the door and it provides direct access to the courtyard in front of the Necropolis. A fast run from the winch, through the hole, out the unbolted doors and across the courtyard gets you inside before the doors slam shut.



If you spared Xana's life, you have to kill Leanna inside the Necropolis entry chamber.



Leanna waits for you inside. If you have sided with Xana, Leanna turns on you and it's a fight to the death. If you sacrificed Xana, Leanna is happy to see you and pledges her aid in the final battle against Arantir.



If you choose Leanna over Xana, she will aid you on your final assault.

Find the valve in the back corner and open the port-cullis. The steps lead down into the Necropolis and your final confrontation with Arantir for the Skull of Shadows.

Epilogue

Chapter Objectives

- Find and take the Skull of Shadows from Arantir!
- Drop Ishtvan's body into the Abyss, thereby releasing him from torment (optional).
- Talk to King Vradek. He is Ishtvan's father, and one of the four lich kings that have sealed the doors to the final chamber of the Necropolis (optional).
- Destroy the three remaining lich kings that block your route to the final chamber of the Necropolis.
- Destroy the four lich kings that have sealed the doors to the final chamber of the Necropolis. Only there will you find Arantir.
- It is time to take your destiny in hand. Use the Skull on the altar to master its power for yourself, or take it to the pyramid to free your father.
- Find Arantir.
- Kill Arantir.
- Take back the Skull of Shadows.

Key Items to Find

Item	General Location	Specifics
Skull of Shadows	The Gateway	On throne by Arantir



Note

Weapon of Choice

Bow of Fiery Rage: You won't need the Bow of Fiery Rage until the final battle, but it is the most important battle. At that point, it's more indispensable than any sword.



Monster Chart

Monster	Vulnerability	Location
Zombies	Holy	Cemetery Landing
Black Guards	Fire	Necropolis Stairs
Necromancers	Holy	Necropolis Stairs
Vampire Knights	Holy	Necropolis Stairs
Necromancers	Holy	Sarcophagus Storage
Black Guards	Fire	Ishtvan's Tomb
Necromancers	Holy	Ishtvan's Tomb
Zombies	Holy	Ishtvan's Tomb
Lich	Holy	Ishtvan's Tomb
Zombies	Holy	Necropolis Plaza
Vampire Knights	Holy	Necropolis Plaza
Undead Cyclops	Holy	Necropolis Plaza
Black Guards	Fire	Necropolis Plaza
Necromancers	Holy	Necropolis Plaza
Vampire Knights	Holy	Inner Courtyard
Black Guards	Fire	Inner Courtyard
Vampire Knights	Holy	Lich Sanctum
Liches	Holy	Lich Sanctum
Necromancers	Holy	Inner Necropolis
Vampire Knights	Holy	Inner Necropolis
Zombies	Holy	Inner Necropolis
Black Guards	Fire	Inner Necropolis
Ghouls	Holy	Inner Necropolis
Bone Dragon	—	Skull of Shadows Chamber
Arantir	—	Skull of Shadows Chamber



Note

Spell of Choice

Fireball: Several spells aid you on your descent into the Necropolis. Fireball tops the list with its long-range destructive power and ability to clear an area quickly.

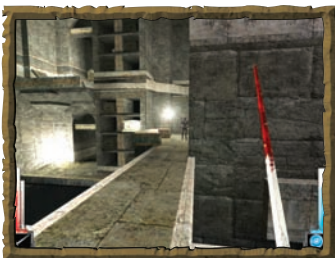


The Descent



Enter the Necropolis and face your first threat on the cemetery landing.

The stairs may be a bit eerie with the shadowy lighting and strange sounds echoing throughout the Necropolis, but you don't have any threats until you stand on the first landing. Just continue making a left turn at each corner until you arrive on a cemetery platform. The cemetery landing is a warm-up for the action ahead—all you face here is a single zombie rising from the earth in the center of the landing. You can even destroy it before the zombie fully rises to its feet.



Swat the first black guard aside.

At the corner to your right, a black guard archer patrols the walkway leading deeper into the Necropolis. If you don't make a lot of noise slaying the zombie, you can usually catch the archer with his back to you. Charge down the walkway and swat him over the edge; he shouldn't even get off a shot.



Tread carefully on the thin ledge while battling a black guard and necromancer.

Around the next turn, look for a thin staircase crossing a large drop as it extends down to the lower level. A black guard challenges you on the stairs, while his necromancer teammates throw Flame Arrows at your side. Fight the guard at either the top or the bottom ledge; not on the steps if you can help it. Your biggest fear should be a fall, which kills you, rather than a sword slash that only wounds. Try a kick or a smash to knock the black guard overboard and get at the necromancer faster.



Note

The nearby ledge at the top landing of the thin staircase runs out to a length of chain. Here you'll find the first bolt that you have to pull to free Ishtvan later in the quest.



A Fireball detonates and collapses the sarcophagus platform down on the next two necromancers.

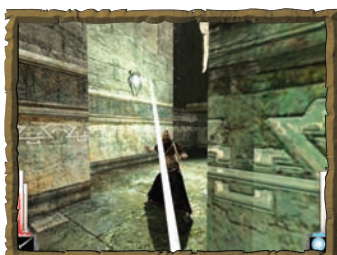


Tread slowly before you enter the next area and prepare a Fireball spell. Two necromancers appear on patrol beneath a platform that holds up empty sarcophagi. The right support on the platform can be destroyed with a well-placed Fireball. Thousands of pounds of stone tumble down on the necromancers if this happens, and you won't have to draw a weapon in this room unless one survives the wreckage.



Confront your first vampire knight and keep your guard up.

To your right, you see an open space with a body suspended by two thick chains. This is Ishtvan, and you will speak with the imprisoned soul on the next lower level. In the meantime, you have a vampire knight to battle around the corner to the right. Don't treat a vampire knight like a black guard—they are much faster, stronger, and more cunning. Be alert and patient. Rather than be aggressive, counterattack more than you might against a black guard and score hits whenever you see an opening without sacrificing defense.



Climb the chain to the next landing with two more of Arantir's servants.

Climb the dangling chain in the corner from which the vampire knight emerged, and draw your weapon as soon as you enter the next main passage. A necromancer and a black guard patrol this area. If you have a choice, rip through the necromancer first and follow up with a blitz on the black guard. Whatever you do, make sure neither escapes to the stairs or you may have a whole lot more enemies coming down on you.



On the long landing, ready yourself for a battle against the lich and his bodyguards.

The stairs lead up to a long, long platform with a statue on either side. A lich and his bodyguards hold the far end of the platform.



When the way is clear, press on to the altar.

There's really no reason to stay back, unless you feel like testing your magic skills against the equally adept dead mage on the far side. Launch a Fireball down the center to either clear enemies out of the main path or hit one and cause an area-effect blast to several foes.



Once the lich goes down, his lackeys fall much easier.

Next, turn your attention to the lich and the necromancer. Dance through the enemies as you cut and move, dealing damage to exposed enemies but always moving to avoid an attack back at you. When you work up enough adrenaline for a fatality, hunt down the lich and slice it in two.



Pull the lever to reveal the secret stairwell and climb down to the lower level.

It should be a mop-up job on the remaining foes after the lich dies. Grab the two mana potions at the foot of the statue and pull the lever on the left. A secret spiral staircase descends to a large gap. You can attempt the jump to the stairs on the other side, or fire a rope arrow and climb down to the lower level.

Ishtvan's Torment



Ishtvan pleads with you from beyond the grave to free his imprisoned body.



After your drop down to the lower level, you should see a blazing white light ahead. This is the imprisoned soul of Ishtvan. He screams out to you in torment from the afterlife, begging for your assistance. If you free his body from the two shackles that hold it in place and release the body into the Abyss, he promises you aid. You don't have to perform the good deed to continue your quest, but it will help in the long run.



Unhinge the first bolt from the thin staircase near the cemetery landing.



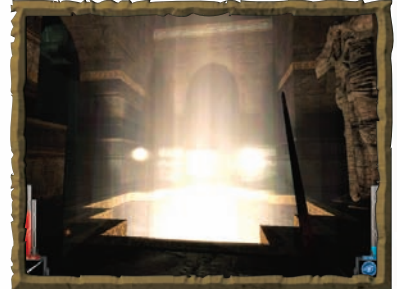
To free Ishtvan, head back up the thin staircase near the original cemetery landing. Search around for a long chain that attaches to a mooring in the wall. Cross the ledge around the mooring and pop the bolt to loosen the first chain.



Free Ishtvan by popping the second bolt over the bridge near his guardian statue.



The second bolt is near Ishtvan's guardian statue. Head back to the long landing where you battled the lich and go to the bridges opposite the ancient bridges that crumbled. Leap off the first bridge to land on the ledge behind the mooring and pop the second bolt. When you return to Ishtvan's area, he thanks you and marks you for his father, one of the Lich Kings you must face ahead. Your efforts will be worth it. Before you leave, collect all the potions around Ishtvan's pit.



Zombies crawl out of the ground before the plaza.

A sarcophagus in the room past Ishtvan holds four mana potions. A zombie rises near the sarcophagus to defend, as does another in the short passage beyond and more in the following mini-courtyard. At this point, you should be whacking these guys in your sleep. If you have trouble, turn back now and forget about Arantir—he's in the big leagues compared to these chumps.

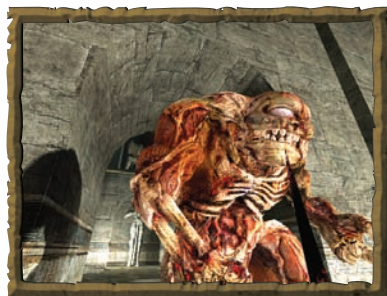


Eliminate the black guards and vampire knights in the plaza first.

A huge plaza stretches out in the area past the zombies. To the left is a large divide that prevents direct access to the exit point on the far side of the plaza. (There's also a collapsible chunk of floor near the divide, so watch your step on the left side!) To the right are a formidable group of Arantir's defenders including vampire knights, black guards, and an undead cyclops.

Deal with the undead cyclops last when you have room to maneuver.

You can get one sneak attack off from behind the rubble on the right side if you choose. Draw the vampire knights back to the zombie courtyard to stay away from the cyclops and the black guard arrows. Keep on your toes as you deal with multiple foes at once. Slay all the humanoids first to give yourself time and space to work on the undead cyclops. Run the standard cyclops tactics, just make sure the necromancer on the left side of the plaza doesn't add Flame Arrows to the chaos.



To cross the divide in the plaza, go high.



Once you have bested all the plaza foes (except the necromancer on the far side), return to the right side of the plaza near the large stone tower. Fire a rope arrow up to the wooden beams on the side closest to the zombie courtyard. Pull yourself up and drop down on the platform that holds a chest with two full health potions.



Slide along the high ledges to reach the far side of the plaza.

Now use the upper ledges to cross to the far side of the plaza. Take a running start from the left side of the treasure sarcophagus and leap to the ledge in front of you. Follow this ledge all the way to the other side.

Leap one gap, and then at the midpoint, fight two zombies.



Two zombies bar your path before you can make your final jump.

If you left any enemies down below in the courtyard or want to cause the necromancer on the other side some grief, cut the rope near the zombies and watch a giant timber swing across the whole plaza in a wide arc.

Epilogue



Cut the pole and use the dangling chain to slip through the large hole in the plaza wall.

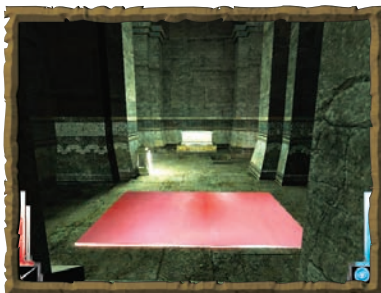


Stay on the ledge until you see a square outcropping and a jump that looks relatively safe to the other side (where there's lighter colored stone). Leap across to the opposite ledge and climb on the platform with the statue. Cut the rope at the far corner and watch as a long pole falls back to the side you just came from. Tightwalk across this pole and then drop down to grab the dangling chain at its end. Slip down this chain a few feet and then jump off and through the large hole in the plaza wall. You've made it to the new area without engaging any more ground guards.



Outwit the two traps prior to the inner courtyard.

Inside, walk up the stairs and pause at the doorway at the top landing. Ahead you'll see a raised portcullis; however, a few steps ahead, a pressure plate triggers a flaming trap in the two small areas before the portcullis. If you trigger the trap, the portcullis slams shut and the flames barbecue you unless you stand precisely in the archway between the two smaller rooms. To avoid the trap altogether, run and jump over it and continue up the stairs past the portcullis.



The second trap is much easier. It's another fire-based trap at the entrance to the next room. If you run at full speed to the far sarcophagus, the trap will fire but miss you completely.



Cross the ledges to the far side of the inner courtyard.

On your left, slip out the window and carefully drop down on the ledge. Stay on the ledge, hugging the wall to the right, until you reach the exact opposite corner. In that corner, drop down on a pile of rubble and reach the courtyard below without injury and far enough away from the vampire knight guards to allow some preparation time.



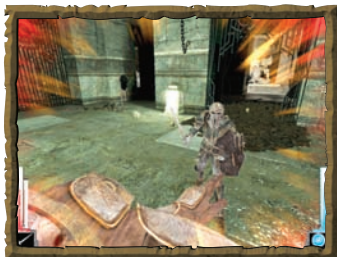
Crush the vampire knights with holy weapons or lots of repeated damage.

Your next battle will tax your skills. Three vampire knights patrol immediately in the area, but reinforcements arrive in a steady stream. If you get bogged down and can't finish off a few enemies early, you might not make it out of this fight.



Reinforcements arrive to aid the vampire knights out front.

Weave through your enemies, and remember to turn a fatality against a strong foe. You have a lot of real estate at your back, so retreat if the enemy tries to flank you. Draw adversaries away from the archway in the corner. This reduces the number of reinforcements arriving early.



Before you visit the four Lich Kings, slay the vampire knights in the room behind the main stairs.

After you run through more than a dozen enemies, work your way inside the maze of barred areas the reinforcements came from. When you reach the platform above the large foyer before the Inner Necropolis doors (how can you miss it—four liches are standing around!), rest up and look for a room to your right, opposite the stairs descending to the liches. Two vampire knights patrol this back room—remove them before your battle with the Lich Kings.



The purple lich will aid you if you've freed Ishtvan. The others will not.

Four Lich Kings have sealed the Inner Necropolis door for Arantir. If you freed Ishtvan, his father, the purple-robed lich, will aid you rather than impede you. When you enter the room, he heals you and then steps back from the fight. Three liches are better than four, without a doubt.



All enemy liches must die to open the inner Necropolis.

The liches launch fire and lightning at you, and summon forth an army of zombies. Circle around them and down the stairs by the Necropolis door. The landing below is a particularly good retreat to heal up. Continue chopping away at zombies and moving. When you build up to fatality level, go after one of the liches. Repeat until three (or four, if you blew off Ishtvan) Lich Kings evaporate into the ether. When the last one falls, the Necropolis doors click open. You've arrived at the last stage of your journey; you can almost near Arantir ahead.



The Final Battle



The landings leading down to the Skull of Shadows chamber have enemies at every corner.

It's not a quiet walk down to your last stand against Arantir. After the doors behind the four liches, you must navigate down a series of stairwells and platforms. Most hold deadly enemies that you need to destroy one by one. Don't run through too quickly or you could pull more than one enemy group on you at a time.

Epilogue



You can heal at the holy pool if you've chosen the path of righteousness; however, expect visitors when you open the door again.



On the first platform, expect a necromancer and a vampire knight. The second platform holds another vampire knight. The third platform hides a second necromancer looking for blood.



Vampire knights work in conjunction with black guards to ensure that you go no farther.

Notice a lever on the wall to your right as you descend to the fourth platform. Watch out for the vampire knight that guards the area. If you pull the lever, you can slip inside the small chamber. Standing on the symbol in the room's center heals you back to full, but only if you have chosen the path of righteousness and sided with Leanna. When you leave the chamber, be careful that you don't get ambushed by a necromancer and his pair of ghouls.



The final guards can't stop you from reaching the long entrance hall to the Skull of Shadows chamber.

As you descend the next three sets of stairs, look out for a black guard, vampire knight, and necromancer. Deal with each in the usual fashion and use

the corners to your advantage as you duck away from flame arrows and sword swings.



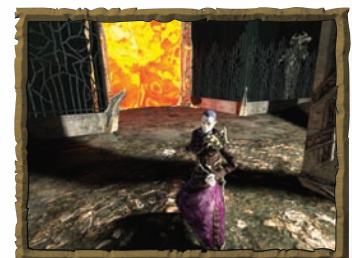
If you have allied with Leanna, she will meet you at the chamber entrance and aid you against Arantir.

The bottom two platforms hold a vampire knight and a necromancer. After you beat them, you can advance to the right in the room with the four exit points. Down the hall, you meet up with Leanna if you sided with her over Xana. She follows you to team up against Arantir for the final battle.



A vampire knight and necromancer guard Arantir's back.

The stairs opposite Leanna lead down to the portal chamber. Arantir chants in front of the altar that holds the Skull of Shadows, seeking a way to seal the portal behind the altar and imprison your father again for another millennium. Before you can reach Arantir, you must slay his two personal bodyguards—a vampire knight at the foot of the main stairs and a necromancer near the rock formation at the chamber's center.



Face off against Arantir for the last time.

Arantir turns his attention to you after you deal with his minions. He can cast a powerful fire spell at you, while turning invisible to make a counter-attack at range difficult. Keep on the move and close with him. This way, if he goes invisible, you can swing in his general area and still inflict damage, even if it's just a grazing shot.

You cannot penetrate Arantir's mystical shield.

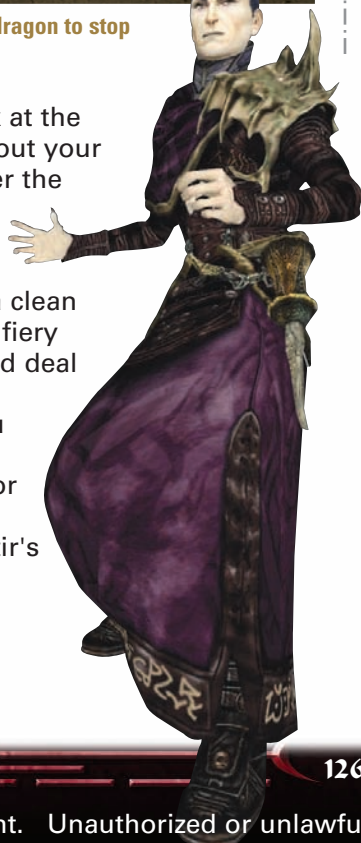
Inflict enough damage on Arantir and he throws up an impenetrable mystical shield. You can't get through this with any conventional weapons. Fortunately, Arantir expends his strength to summon forth a bone dragon. The key to defeating Arantir is to beat on the dragon.



Arantir summons forth a monstrous dragon to stop your interference.



Circle around the big rock at the chamber's center and draw out your Bow of Fiery Rage. Whenever the dragon breathes lighting, dodge out of the way or slip behind the rock and use it as cover. When you have a clean shot at the dragon, launch a fiery arrow at its head or torso and deal damage. As your adrenaline pumps up from each hit, you get closer and closer to a fatality. Significant damage or a fatality will fade out the dragon, and this drops Arantir's shield.



The perfect shot finally finishes Arantir.



You have only a few seconds, so line up a quick arrow shot on Arantir. A powerful headshot or several good body blows will eventually kill Arantir. Unfortunately, you only get one shot before his pet dragon reappears and you have to do the dance all over again. Don't give up and the Skull will be yours.



Caution

Your battle against Arantir will be intense. Order Leanna to stay out of the fight, and out of harm's way, unless you feel you need a little extra firepower.

The Skull of Shadows is yours to do with as you wish.

Once you have the Skull, you have two choices—keep it for yourself by placing it back on the altar, or give it to your father by climbing up the stairs behind the portal and dropping the Skull in the pit.



To save Leanna, you must imprison your demon father once again with the Skull.



Epilogue



Depending on who you sided with, Leanna or Xana, you earn one of four cinematic endings. If you sided with Leanna and keep the Skull, you use the Skull of Shadows to drive your father back to his prison and save Leanna—and countless others—from certain death. If you have Leanna with you and you decide to give the Skull to your father, he breaks Leanna like a used puppet and promises a new age of ruin with you by his side.



Another ending has you give the Skull of Shadows to your father to rule by his side.

If you side with Xana and keep the Skull for yourself, it's a similar ending, though this time you spare Xana's life and imprison your father. Giving the skull to your father with Xana by your side leads to equally devastating consequences for the land.



If you take Xana to the end, you can choose to save her by thwarting your father with the Skull.



In the end, it's up to you how you want to end the quest. After all that you've been through, after the battles and betrayals, what do you want to do with the power of the Skull? One way or the other, you will earn the title of "Dark Messiah."



Hand over the Skull to your father and watch the world crumble around you.



Multiplayer Messiah

Nasty monsters and powerful bosses are nothing compared to human beings. Don't believe us? Despite *Dark Messiah's* superb single-player A.I., your average orc isn't as smart as your average human enemy, and there's something unpredictable and downright unfair about a human opponent who can dodge and weave like a World Cup striker going to goal.

You're definitely in for a challenge when you hit the multiplayer maps for the first time. You might as well forget most of what you learned from your battles through the single-player levels. Thinking "solo" in a multiplayer game can get you killed—fast.



Get used to the fast-paced action in multiplayer. It's no stroll through Stonehelm.



Tactics and Tips

To avoid life in the spawning queue, you'll have to change your tactics from those you used in solo play. Go ahead and jump right into the online games, just be prepared for a small learning curve as you gain command of the new map terrains and adjust your playing strategy to the faster pace of deathmatches and campaign battles. Here are a few tips to land you your first capture points and lead you toward ultimate victory.



Practice until you know your multiplayer options as well as solo play.



Tip

Work with the other classes on your team. Abilities like the priestess' Brambles spell, the assassin's Cloak, and the archer's Burning Arrow play off each other as a coordinated unit.

Quick Feet

In single-player mode, you can usually move through an area methodically. Depending on your quest, you can leisurely reconnoiter the place, set up your battle plan, and then call the shots when the time is right—not so in multiplayer.



Tip

Use the lock-on ability to continually face your opponent. It's especially useful for close combat when an assassin moves in for the kill.



Unless you're playing a sniper character, take short peeks at the key vantage points on maps like Border Keep, and keep moving to avoid becoming a sitting duck.

Keep those legs moving at all times. Being a moving target makes it difficult for the enemy to paint a bull's-eye on you. If the enemy is alert to your presence—even if you want to line up the perfect shot—it's better to fire on the run rather than risk a counterattack that could blast you to smithereens. A stationary target makes for an easy target.

Even if you run out of stamina, keep moving. Zigzag, dash behind cover, jump around, and make yourself a harder target. Yes, it's harder to hit someone while you're on the run, but that's where all that combat training comes in handy, right?



Circle an enemy while sprinting to expose his defenses.

Multiplayer Messiah

Against a group of enemies or one particularly troublesome enemy, circle and flank as you fire. Dancing around increases your survival odds and can set you up for a better angle on potential future foes.



Tip

Save your stamina for combat. You don't want to be caught flat-footed without energy to sprint when a warrior comes charging at you.

In cases where you're assaulting a guarded enemy position, teamwork prevails. Rather than go it alone, team up with one or a few allies and attack as an organized unit. Your archer's arrow, for example, might draw someone from cover as your fellow mage's fireball takes him out. Cover fire can also distract the enemy while melee specialists like the warrior and assassin move in. If you have to strike alone and you know the map well, try for an alternate angle that attacks from the side or rear.



On the Nelsham's Scar map, you can attack while going down stairs to slay unsuspecting enemies.

The Kill Perspective



Smash heads with the warrior for some stress release, but put on your thinking cap for the real battles.



Get the bloodlust out of your system now. If you find the overwhelming need to bash heads, don the warrior's sword and shield and have it out with a bunch of newbies who aren't sure if the robes they're wearing belong to a mage or a priestess.



Caution

You will be tempted to use stamina to get from place to place faster, but don't do it! Save your stamina for combat maneuvers, primarily on defense.

The most common multiplayer setup, the Campaign game isn't about kills, it's about flags. Your kills only matter for a wee bit of experience, and that's nothing compared to flipping capture points. Killing for the sake of killing will usually force you to break from the team's game plan, and you'll be concentrating on players and not flags, while those precious points tick down on your game clock.



Dying to save a teammate could be more important than slaying that one extra enemy.



Always be on alert to defend your current flag or storm out to the next one.



If you're not defending a flag, you should be trying to capture a flag, not looking to rack up kills. Of course, you should do whatever's fun for you. Just make sure that your teammates are cool with that or that you join a battle as a lone wolf.

Team Leveling



Spend experience from your skill screen to boost your character's abilities.

As with any game, the higher your level, the more experience points you earn, the more powerful you'll become. It's the same in *Dark Messiah*, except you may not want to run up those experience points all by your lonesome.



For a quick experience boost, capture a flag.

Each capture point on the map nets you 100 experience points. However, there are a limited number of neutral capture points (the number varies from map to map). Neutral capture points are where it's easiest to lower the flag because they're initially unguarded. Taking an enemy-held flag is much tougher—and much slower—than taking a neutral flag, cutting into your team's experience growth and access to higher-level skills.



Tip

Allow a teammate to lower a flag if he's in need of skill points. There is a big difference at lower levels between a character with two or three active skills and a character with nothing.

Upon entering a battle, discuss with your team how you want to tackle the flags. If possible, classes like the mage and archer, which really get a solid offensive boost when they acquire a few skill points, should be allowed to capture the "free," neutral flags. It's easier for warriors and assassins to dish out real damage even without an initial upgrade. After the neutral flags are captured, teammates can gain experience through kills and flipping enemy flags.



If you see a flag lowering by itself, keep on the lookout for invisible enemy assassins.



Suicide runs work if you need a few extra exp. points.



Tip

Spend your skill points right away. You want those new skills, and you can always reset your skill trees later after you earn more experience to reach the higher skills.

If you find yourself on the short end of the stick on the experience chain and your team's defense looks like it's solid, you may want to take a run at an unguarded flag behind enemy territory. Even if you don't escape getting an arrow in the back or a Lightning Bolt to the forehead, or the flag gets flipped right back, it's still worth the individual skill points you gain. A death, after all, spawns you right back next to your buddies.

Mages and priestesses are weak at lower levels. Let these teammates capture the first flag points while the strong starters serve as a vanguard. When the weaklings get their wings, you'll be thankful for it.

Keep losing bases? Try skirting around to the other side of the map and start capturing points behind enemy lines, where they're less likely to be on the lookout.

Have a priestess lay Brambles or Poison Cloud at choke points you're defending. When an enemy comes through slowed or disoriented, have a mage or archer pick them off with little risk.

Memorize the terrain and use it to your advantage. You can establish choke points and identify alternate routes to the other side of the map. Knowing where you can go is crucial to success.

Use spawn points to your advantage. When you die, select the spawn point closest to the current battlefield. It will save you a lot of unnecessary running.



Frag Doll Team Strategies

The "One Man Army" Approach



The Fireblast can wipe out two or three players at once, but it costs 10 skill points.

Multiplayer Messiah

A mage that can guide a Fireblast around the battlefield, igniting everything in its path, or the expert archer with a Drill Arrow can wreck destruction on the opposing side. Generally, it's best if your whole team levels up evenly—you certainly don't want a lot of weak links in the chain—but there is something to be said if you or one of your teammates powers up the experience ladder to reach an überskill.



At the start of each game, dash to the area with the most neutral flags to power up your experience.

This leveling up comes about naturally in a long battle or a campaign. Of course, you want your side to have a big, bad skill *before* (and for as long as possible before) the other team has one, so you may want to "cheat" the experience toward a single teammate. If you're good in combat, you can quickly climb your skill tree, or, without even a single blow, your teammates can allow you to capture each flag and suck up the skill points from each level gain.

Capture Points



You don't have to eliminate all the flags to win. Hold the majority and your team will win on points.

The ebb and flow of capture points determines most multiplayer battles. If you control the field—that is, hold the majority of capture points—you have more options where to spawn and can force the enemy points to slowly dwindle on the game timer.



Watch for sudden enemy spawns around a recently lost capture point.

Go on the offense early and sprint out to any neutral capture points to convert them. Don't waste your setup time. While the grace period ticks down, you can still rush out and surround a spawn point or two. Then, when the battle officially begins, you can immediately pounce on that first capture point.



Tip

Don't forget to reset your spawn point close to the action after you die. Running from spawn points deep inside your territory wastes precious time.

Watch your in-game map. If one of your blue allied capture points suddenly goes white, you've lost a possible spawn point. On the flip side, you now know exactly where the enemy is positioned and can set up a counterattack or a maneuver to outflank them.



Play defense while you sit on a capture point. A priestess can throw up a Restoration Sphere, while a warrior can hold up his shield against stray attacks.

When you're stocked with skills, you may want to forgo converting an enemy flag completely to your side. It takes about 20 seconds to fully flip an enemy flag, but only half that time to turn it neutral. Players cannot spawn at a neutral capture point, so when you're pressed for time or want to reduce the enemy's spawn potential and drive them deeper into their own territory, leave the neutral capture point for a trailing teammate while you forge ahead to cut off another enemy capture point.



While you have the advantage, press on toward the next flag. It only takes one teammate to convert the capture point.

Also, offense isn't the only way to win a map. Yes, you need offense, but once you control the majority of flags, a sound strategy is to sit and hold those points rather than to press on. Concentrate your forces at a choke point, especially one with a friendly flag, and make sure you don't let any enemies slip behind the battle line. When you're up on victory points, a team running around looking for kills can easily find itself without any flags and losing in very short order.

Back Breaker



Face front while defending and strike from the rear when attacking.

We've talked about keeping your feet moving and flanking opponents to avoid becoming a barbecued steak or a warrior's shish kebab. Here's another important consideration for a surprise assault: Attacks from the side and back do more damage than those made head-on. Team up with a buddy and draw an enemy's attention while your friend circles around to attack, or vice versa. On the flip side, when you're defending against an attack, face your enemy whenever possible to minimize damage.



Don't underestimate a low-level opponent. You may have the advantage with extra skills, but a combat-savvy enemy can still hurt you or set you up for his "big brother" to finish you off.

Bait and Switch



In a "bait" trap, the warrior stands "defenseless" while his teammates line up ranged shots from ambush.

Two related tactics can bag you some experience and drive the opposition nuts. First try a "bait" maneuver. One player, probably a warrior or an assassin, acts as bait for the trap. The bait character stands out in the open or under partial cover and pretends not to notice the incoming enemies. The rest of his team stays well hidden until the enemies come into range, then the teammates unleash with simultaneous ranged attacks to decimate the enemy. The "bait" then charges at the most distracted enemy for good measure.



The more complicated "switch" trick requires a wounded teammate who's nimble on his toes.

With two or more players, you can run a "switch" routine on the enemy. One teammate who is low on health gets an opponent to follow him. Again, a warrior works great if he has points in extra stamina; you don't want him getting caught before the trap springs. The wounded character sprints away from the enemy and ducks around a large cover spot, like a boulder or corner wall. His teammate, fully charged, lies in wait and pops out when the enemy arrives to lay waste to the weakened and startled mark. Thus, the tables are turned.

Class Swap

The beauty of *Dark Messiah* multiplayer battles is the ability to switch your class mid-battle. Too many priestesses running around to see through your assassin's Cloak? After you die, click over to an archer and plug away at range.



You can be any class in multiplayer, and you can even switch after each death.

Multiplayer Messiah

The downside is that skills points earned while you're playing a certain class will stay with that class; they don't transfer over. When you swap into a new class, you'll have to pick up some skill points quickly. But by switching classes, you have the flexibility of adapting to the enemy's battle tactics and changing into the suit that's just right for the job.



If you want to switch classes mid-fight, swap early so as not to sink too many skill points into the "dead" class.

Memorize the Map



Study each map for its nuisances, such as the broken crosswalk above the ruins in Border Keep or the tunnels of Nelsham's Scar.



You had better know where every bridge, hidden tunnel, and side staircase on the map is located. At the very least, study your in-game map for the location of each capture point. Where can you find cover under a hail of arrows? What's the most strategic ledge from which to stage an ambush? If you don't know, you can bet your opponent does, and will make you pay for that mistake.



The Stonehelm streets are far different from the labyrinth of Nar-Heresh.



Heard of camping? It's not roasting hot dogs around the fire and singing "Happy Trails." It's holding the best map spots. For example, on the Nelsham's Scar map, players might stake out tunnel entrances or the high points on the wooden staircases to rain death down on those seeking to take the capture points on the bridges below. You need to know the favorite camping spots

so you can prevent others from getting there, or maybe exploit them yourself.

As you play, study all the capture points. Once you figure them out, you can immediately take off toward your objective without wasting time. When you kill an enemy, you'll also have an idea from which direction the next one might be coming. Knowledge of the spawn points can help you plan the best attack strategies and give you a "sixth sense," as you can sometimes anticipate the enemy's movement.



The upper walls in the Border Keep ruins are a popular hotspot for ranged characters.

The Classes

With five classes and more than 40 skills to choose from, how do you decide what's best? Part of the answer is individual preference: do you like a ranged master like the archer, an in-your-face type of fighter like the warrior, or a magic-wielder like the priestess?

Another part will be skills. If you're in love with the Lightning Sphere, then go ahead and play the mage. Do you like to help your teammates? Try out the priestess.



Choose a skill setup that's comfortable for you and rule the map with it.



Try building an offensive character like the archer or a defensive character like the priestess and switch on the fly according to your team's needs.



Of course, a large part of your character choice will be the in-game match-ups. Savvy combat moves can win any battle; however, certain classes match up better versus other classes. Read through the following chapters for each class' skills and match-ups to help you decide on your next multiplayer choice.

The Archer

Ever since archers were first portrayed in the movies as action heroes (*The Lord of the Rings*, *Robin Hood*), we've dreamed of playing the heroic archer. There's something about drawing back that bowstring and waiting for the perfect shot. It appeals to the prehistoric hunter in us all. In *Dark Messiah* you get the chance to let loose lethal projectiles, as well as play with enhanced senses and a quiver full of trick arrows.



Poison or fire? The special effects on your arrow tips affect your combat dramatically.

Mastering the Archer



Hang back and pluck away at opponents at range. You are a sniper, not a swordsman.

You don't see many S.W.A.T. snipers leading the charge through a battered door into a suspect's apartment. There's a good reason for that: Snipers excel at scouting and zeroing in for a kill, when they have time. In close combat, they may suck up bullets, but they won't be delivering any.

Nestled into the backdrop that is the fray of battle, I am moving close on the outskirts and pinpointing with precise accuracy your black hearts. I love to strategically position myself and unload my arrows into your black soul and you may be close, but not close enough to hurt me. My bow is my best friend and its aim is as true as the death you are about to partake of. Beware the trails of my arrows as they cascade lights of white, black, and green around you, for I certainly have your heinous form in my sights and it is only a matter of time before you are a withering pool of fire, poison, or thorns—whatever my flavor is for the day. Your senses become disorientated, your body pulsating in flames, and if you do not find my location quickly, you will certainly be dead and mourned by none.

Tips

If you plan to be a long-range archer, make sure you spend points on Composite Bow and Eagle Eye. Both abilities will help you hit an enemy and do the maximum possible damage at greater distances.

If you invest in Double or Triple Arrows, you can usually take down a charging mob in one or two shots.

Want to fight close in battle? Upgrade your reload speed so you can fire off arrows as quickly as possible. Double and Triple Arrows can also be a lifesaver in a close-up fight. Pick up either the Poisoned Arrows or Flame Arrow skills for a little extra kick with every shot.

Remember to take gravity into account! You'll have to overshoot more to hit distant enemies.

Try Rhoulette's Archer build: Put a point each into Composite Bow and Eagle Eye, then invest in a special arrow and pump points into maximizing your Composite Bow and Eagle Eye abilities. It's deadly at a safe distance.



Frag Doll Tips

The Archer



Stay still before your archer shoots. After firing a successful volley, duck for cover or retreat to a new position and a new angle on the enemy.

In *Dark Messiah's* fantasy setting, that rule about not charging into the fray is doubly true. Whether playing the sniper role or hanging around as a support character, the archer should not be the one at the front of the battle lines and he certainly shouldn't be running through mazes or around corners in enemy territory all by his lonesome.

Archer at a Glance

Strengths:

- One-shot kills
- Pure offensive capabilities
- Very long range
- Varied, viable builds

Weaknesses:

- Zero melee capabilities
- No personal defense
- Very slow damage output
- Slow shot speed

When you first play the archer, or if you join a game late and kick into lone wolf mode until you're up to speed, you'll naturally gravitate toward a sniper role. It's basically what you would expect from a guy with a bow—you sit high up on a perch and pick off targets. Most often, you'll stay defensive, either guarding a flag or looking to control a certain space.

On the Border Keep map, for example, the Ancient Keep in the center has a "window" or two facing some relatively open ground. A skilled archer can definitely hold off an opponent or two who is trying to cross the open space. The window is elevated, has a view of most of the open ground, and there's not a ton of cover in that open space. With two or more skill points in Composite Bow, you can peg people from quite a distance.



You can snipe a sniper with a surprise strike.

Similarly, on the Nelsham's Scar map, your archer can find all sorts of nasty, elevated positions from which you can guard a capture point. Again, apply points to Composite Bow, but even without it, a couple of spots around the East and West Bridge make it easy enough to hit folks.

Being a sniper usually means low scores. Archers aren't deathmatchers who race into the enemy position and clean house, nor are they the guys with mega spells that wipe out whole areas. Playing a sniper requires serious thought, psychological insight, and patience, followed by accuracy and speed. It's one of the most rewarding classes in any tactical shooter.

Still, the archer has less flexibility for errors than some of the other classes. Scout out good sniper positions ahead of time, like long hallways, an elevated ledge, or open windows. Basically, choose any secluded spot that doubles as cover if you are spotted. Once in position, sit still before you shoot. The human eye naturally moves to motion, so if your character dances around before making his assassination attempt, odds are other players will notice you and avoid the kill shot.



Choose map locations ahead of time that will serve as sniper spots and cover for quick retreats.

A more aggressive player may opt for an attacking style. You still can't pretend your archer is a warrior and charge into a pitched battle, but you can add certain skills, like Double Arrow and Triple Arrow, that increase your point-blank hit percentage. Since most of your targets will be charging at you, whipping side to side and jumping to throw off your aim, Triple Arrow sort of evens the playing field. By shooting a spread of three arrows in a roughly 60-degree arc in front of you, you have a far better chance of hitting that bunny-hopping foe. As an added bonus, the target might be hit with more than one arrow—possibly three arrows at point-blank range—which virtually guarantees a kill. It definitely puts a dent in that warrior who thought you were an easy target.

Dark Messiah

MIGHT AND MAGIC

PRIMA Official Game Guide



Trail behind your teammates to provide support fire from the rear.



Tip

Triple Arrow is the medieval version of a shotgun blast. Enemies have a hard time dodging it and will go down in a heap if more than one arrow hits.

As in all team games, providing distractions while your teammates advance is key. Causing that distraction and then picking off a couple of defenders is even better. While you support the defense, the enemy attackers are looking at your teammate, the big target in the plate mail. They don't see you elevated and zoomed in, waiting for them to get just a little bit closer.



Your arrows can provide distractions, or they can end the threat immediately.

By keeping the enemy attackers at bay—either by killing them outright, or by giving them something to think about while your arrows whistle past them (or at *worst*, killing them after they kill your buddy)—you might give your teammates the chance to get close enough to really put the hurt on them. Alternatively, you might be the guy who's supposed to be doing the killing while the warrior stands in as bait. As the warrior waves "Yoo-hoo!" the enemy turns, and suddenly his throat develops a nasty gash.



While a warrior teammate distracts the enemy, you can land some early damage to help turn the fight.

Because of the archer's slow reload rate, every shot needs to count. This means you *might* get two shots off against a charging target. Your arrow also travels pretty slowly, requiring you to lead your target a fair amount, depending on range and so on. To play an archer, your veins need to be filled with ice water, especially if you're going to be staring down a charging warrior, with only a loaded bow in your hands, and expect to put one where it hurts.



Tip

Don't underestimate the old stick-by-the-doorway-with-a-loaded-bow" trick. Because archers have that fabulous one-shot kill ability, you can stand there with a shot ready to pierce the first enemy head that peeks around the corner.

Because the arrow is effectively a slow-moving projectile, and can be dodged at range, you won't be hitting nearly as often as you'd like. To make up for that, your biggest advantage is that if you hit, you kill. Strike a target with a Drill Arrow from behind, or at full bow extension at medium-close range from the front, and you stand an excellent chance of killing your target with one shot.



You can pick off targets from the perimeter if you're careful.

Another obvious downside to playing an archer is the utter lack of melee skill or armor. Archers don't stand up to magic, they can't run, they can't take a hit, and their rate of fire leaves something to be desired. If something gets within melee range, you have exactly one chance to live—and you had better hit the target square. Even if you pull off a melee kill, you're bound to be badly injured anyway.



Expect some blood, even your own, after a melee attack.

The Archer



Tip

Let's face it, archers are squishy. You *must* keep enemies at a distance if you expect to live.

A relatively hidden weakness is that if you find yourself in a depressed position (that is, lower than your opponent), your arrows will do less damage, and have far less range, due to gravity. Of course, the opposite is also true. An archer in an elevated position can do more damage, and fire longer distances. Of course, learning to deal with these angles, elevations, shot speeds, and range isn't a trivial exercise. Just be glad that wind isn't an issue.



You will not have to account for wind in the game, but you will need to think about angles and elevation.

The sniper has three natural enemies: the counter-sniper, the guy standing behind you, and the guy with the big sword within 50 feet. Be faster than the counter-sniper, keep your back to the wall, and don't let anyone near you. Sounds obvious, but it's way too easy to get wrapped up in the fight right in front of you and lose track of the other elements around you. Glance around every now and then to fix your bearings. Be ever watchful.

Archer Skills



From up on a perch or down on the ground, the archer is always dangerous.

As in any first-person shooter, the ultimate build is wholly dependent on the skill and style of the player. If you're a run-and-gun, up-close-and-personal kind of player, you'll want to go with Triple Arrow, and follow that shortly with Flame Arrow. If you're a more patient sort and prefer to have your enemies come to you, you're best off with Composite Bow to launch arrows a long way, followed by Poison or Bramble Arrows to cripple the enemy.



Available early, Poison Arrows offer great disruption power. One hit will "blind" opponents with the poison's hallucinogens.

In all circumstances, no matter the build, your first level's worth of points will go to Composite Bow 1 and Fast Reload 1. Every build works from that position. You can help relieve the archer's insufficient rate of fire by investing in Fast Reload. Composite Bow serves double duty by increasing arrow range and damage up close.



Tip

If you need more oomph at lower levels, try Poison Arrows. The deluxe version only costs 3 points and leaves a damaged enemy disoriented for a long, long time after a successful hit.



Stock up on Composite Bow and Fast Reload for maximum sniping.

When slipping into sniper mode, drop all your first few levels worth of points into Composite Bow (for range) and Fast Reload (for speed). Everything else is just nice to have. Eagle Eye isn't as critical as you'd think. It's good for scouting and notifying your team of enemy movement, but not great for actually aiming and shooting. Poison and Burning Arrow ratchet up the damage factor and help make every hit count, but you can still do plenty of damage without them.



Burning Arrow causes pain when it sets your enemy on fire.

For the more suicidal archers heading deep into combat, go with the Composite Bow tree—invest as many extra points as you have available in Composite Bow, then Double Arrow, followed by Triple Arrow. After that, sink points into Fast Reload, Burning Arrow, or Poison Arrow. Flare Arrow is only worth taking because you need it to get the Burning Arrow.



Work together with your squad to capture the more difficult enemy flagspots.

The majority of your time as an archer will probably be spent in the support role. The recommended build starts by maxing out in Fast Reload and Composite Bow. Choose your build based on the team's needs: offensive firepower or defensive support. Offensive leans toward the attacking, insane, melee archer, while defensive shifts toward the steady, calm sniper. You can also focus on Poison Arrows and Bramble Arrows to really mess with nicked enemies. Impairing a mage's vision really helps kill him outright, and slowing down a warrior is the kiss of death for the lobster.



Don't underestimate the value of wounding enemies. If you impair their vision or cut down their health, your companions can finish them off easier.



The archer as a support/sniper can be extremely challenging, and incredibly rewarding. Nothing provides better taunts than wiping out an entire opposing team before your team even gets into position, or finishing a round with a single shot that kills the last opponent...right where you knew he would be.

Match-ups on the Battlefield



If you don't see an enemy for a while on the battlefield, that's a good thing for the archer. Just make sure when you see one, he dies.

As the ranged archer, you may not get to see all the classes close up and in action right away—and that's the way you like it. Generally speaking, the more distance you put between your rivals, the happier you'll be. Head-to-head match-ups for the archer will come down to playing to your strengths and avoiding those weaknesses if at all possible.

Archer vs. Assassin



Do not let the assassin slip behind you at all costs.

If you even see an assassin before he's up in your grill, you're playing against a rookie. A smart assassin stays out of sight until he can get behind you and plant a pair of daggers in your back. Your best friend is a priestess, who can mark these guys before they get close. When you see them, kill them quickly. Once they

get inside your guard, you're done. They're not as tough as the warrior and his armor, but they're a nightmare up close.

Archer vs. Warrior



It's all you at range, while the warrior has the big advantage in melee.

This match is a matter of positioning. If a warrior engages in front of you—or worse, behind you—and enters charging range, you're in for a beating. On the other hand, if you can get one at distance, in the open, the warrior is a sitting duck. Warriors have no ability to hurt you at range, so you have an excellent chance of being able to hit them a few times. You should note, however, that a warrior can deflect arrows with his shield, and his armor takes some of the sting out of an otherwise lethal shot. A smart warrior moves quickly, using sprint and Leaping Attack to his advantage, and ducks in and out of cover until he can close range with you. If you expect to live, make sure he never gets there.

Archer vs. Priestess



Kill a priestess quickly before she can heal herself back to full health.

This is a fun fight. A smart priestess will lay down the carpet of Brambles and mark you, then laugh while every other player on her team pounds the heck out of you. On the other hand, priestesses are fragile, and they don't have huge damage output. If you're any good, stick and move, keep strafing, and tag them a few times. Watch for the Brambles zones, and get out of them as quickly as possible. Remember that priest-

esses heal, so kill them with a single shot if possible, or you're going to be fighting a team with *really* large health bars.

Archer vs. Mage



A good archer will smoke a mage before the mage spots him, or the odds of survival could decline in a hurry.

Forget it. A mage has all of your strengths, and none of your attack weaknesses. Yeah, they're easy to kill if you hit them, but a smart mage is always on the move. He has a faster rate of fire, and his shots move faster than yours. In essence, if the mage is any good, he's moving just like you are, he's keeping his distance, and he's firing like you do—unfortunately, his shots are a guaranteed kill if they hit you. And if they don't, they sit on the ground and explode in short order, limiting your mobility. There is hope, though. With your single-shot kills, you have one chance to fell the mage—just don't miss.

Archer vs. Archer



When facing a fellow archer, keep moving and head for high ground if you can.

Ah, the mano a mano match-up. All things being equal, the archer with the highest level wins. More abilities mean more damage. If it's completely equal, the archer in the elevated position wins. On flat ground, it's all skill. The archer who knows his angles, ranges, elevations and lead time best ultimately takes the prize.

The Assassin

Assassins get a bad rap. Most people think of them as the "blade to the throat when you're not looking" cowards who run from battle if they can't hit you from behind. Sure, your best combat move might be the mighty backstab, but it's the assassins' underrated stealth, scouting, and devious trap-making that sets them apart. Next time you want to earn some props from your fellow players, capture a few flags without ever drawing your daggers or set up a veritable minefield around the defensive perimeter and blow the enemy sky high.



Hiding in the shadows isn't the only thing assassins do well.

I am the stealthiest and the sneakiest of all of you, and you will be dead in one hit to prove it. I enjoy nothing more than to slice your throats and I will take any of you weaklings out in the close-combat fray before you have a chance to say I was there. I am a formidable foe to anyone on the battlefield ground, not just the ones that protect your weak and disgusting bodies. I will vanish and move swiftly and deftly throughout the lot of you as I pummel my blades into your twitching back muscles. You will all wonder in amazement what hit you as you tumble to the ground in a haze of blood and gore and as I once again vanish into the shadows. My cloak protects me from your putrid eyes, and you are most certainly my next prey, so watch your back, you fool! I love to add the element of surprise to my victims. Soon your decaying bodies will be on the ground. Do not be fooled by my short daggers, as they are quick, nimble, and lethal to your ghastly skin. Should my masked body be in position behind you, your prayers to any gods will not be answered, nor will you have time to say them as you crumble to my feet.

Tips

Cloak is your best friend. It will get you up close and personal with your enemies before they know you're there. Just remember it only works for a short while.

The Feign Death ability can be useful in large games where you can disguise yourself among the dead, but make sure no one

sees you dropping or you're a sitting duck when they come for you. It's a great way to get behind a passing opponent for a backstab.

Backstabbing is your most powerful attack. It should drop any enemy in one attack.

Poison Orbs are great for surprising your enemies. Lay them at choke points and flag points. Then, when the enemy sets them off, an archer or mage can finish them easily.

Try increasing your stamina so you can sprint longer and close in on enemies faster than they can run away.

The Arterial Strike attack will open an incurable wound in your enemy's hide. Even if they kill you, they're done for, and you'll still get the credit.

Watch out for enemy priestesses. They can mark you, negating the benefit of your Cloak ability.

Try Seppuku's Assassin build: Level up your Cloak ability, invest in Poison Orbs and Arterial Strike, and pump up your stamina. You'll be quick, invisible, and lethal.



Frag Doll Tips

Mastering the Assassin



A few hits in close will cause massive damage to you. Move quickly and often to avoid internal injuries.

Let's get this straight right away: Assassins are not punching bags. They can't take much damage at all. Whether against ranged attacks, or warriors in melee, assassins make glancing blows seem like one-shot kills; they're that fragile. Archers, mages, and warriors can sever an assassin in half with a single attack. Priestesses can slow assassins and then Corrupt them to death. Against other assassins, it's about who can strafe better as you try to cut the other person down. So, the crucial tactic in any situation is simple: Go slowly, stay out of sight and, most importantly, be patient.

Because the idea is to stay hidden, your Cloak is your best friend. Use the invisibility effect anytime you could wander into enemy troops. It does drain your mana bar, so watch that closely, and stop the effect if you think you might need mana for any of your other tricks.



A patient assassin gains more kills.

Assassin at a Glance

Strengths:

- Backstab kills any class with one hit
- Can Cloak to sneak up on or hide
- Very fast in melee combat
- Poison and traps can disorient enemies

Weaknesses:

- No ranged attack at all
- Weak armor
- Priestess can see through Cloak
- Must be an expert in strafing or you're toast

In combat, backstab proves your most powerful weapon. Sneak behind an enemy, hold down the attack button, and release when you're close enough to deal a life-splattering slash. A message flashes across your screen when you can perform the backstab, so hold until you see it. If performed correctly, the backstab instantly kills any player, any class.



The lock-on ability automatically spins you to face your opponent in the twists and turns of rapid combat.

You'll do a lot of dodging and weaving as an assassin. Rely on the lock-on ability at all times. This "locks" on to your victim and moves you to face him no matter where he turns. It's very important when engaging an enemy for hand-to-hand battles; you don't want to get spun around and leave your own back exposed!



Backstabbing an enemy assassin is particularly satisfying.

Once you're engaged, sidestep continuously. When you stay in motion, the other player has to keep moving to hit you and has to guess where you're moving to strike successfully. All you have to do is keep facing him and swing away. If you are fast enough, you can sneak behind him and get that backstab in.



Scouting and capture-point runs are high on the assassin's mission list.

All that works great for offense, but most of the time the assassin will be assigned other duties. Think about scouting and flag capture on the majority of your

missions. Stay hidden while you carefully navigate the map. Wait for the opposing team to move past, then sneak in behind them, capturing a spawn point. This strategy is very useful, especially when your team is losing, or when you're playing solo. Capturing points behind enemy lines forces the opposing team to split up, or backtrack, to regain them, thus allowing your team to advance.



If you capture a spawn point well behind enemy lines, expect a trying journey while getting out.



On defense, defend your spawn points and teammates. Stick close to both, wait for an opportunity to attack from the rear, but mainly defend. It's a good strategy for when you are winning. Make them come to you, and if you catch them in a hurry-up offense, an enemy might make a mistake and leave his back exposed for your lethal strike.



Check your mana bar continuously because most of your skills drain it.

All your skills, except Second Breath and Stalk, drain your mana bar when activated. Keep an eye on your mana bar so that it isn't empty when you need it most. A good thing to do, especially when using Cloak, is to find a hiding spot, deactivate the Cloak, and let your mana regenerate back to full before continuing.

Move from shadow to shadow, go slowly, and take your time, and you'll stay alive longer.



An invisible assassin can flip a flag and the enemy team might not even notice it's turning.



Overall, the assassin is mostly a support class. He's most effective fighting alongside other teammates, especially if they can distract the enemy long enough for the assassin to move into deadly position. He can also be good for flipping a flag while the rest of the team advances. Stand on the flag, go into stealth mode, and flip the flag while remaining completely invisible. After the flag turns to your cause, the assassin can slip back into the action and hopefully land another surprise deathblow.



Toggle off Cloak and onto Poison Dagger if you're forced into a face-to-face confrontation.



Assassin Skills



The assassin owns lots of varied abilities. Juggle your skill set depending on the situation.



Stealth can slip you through enemy lines and behind that unwary opponent guarding a flag. Deadly poisons give you an edge in battle. Tricks such as poison gas traps and exploding bombs make you an unpredictable foe. All these are at your disposal with the assassin's skill tree.



With the best Cloak ability, you can move faster without being detected.

The Assassin

At early levels, you need to upgrade your Cloak with your first three experience points. The upgrade allows you to hide longer, which helps for moving into position for both capturing and combat. Also, unlike many other games, turning invisible does not slow you down—though the faster you move, the less transparent you become. After you spend those Cloak points, it depends on your mission what skills you take next.



Clear your assassin role with your team before the battle, because you can customize your skills to task at hand.

For scouting and capture runs, invest in Stalk (up to three points) to further keep you stealthy. Second Breath (two points) lets you run for longer distances, which translates into capturing flags quicker. If you run into a jam behind enemy lines, Feign Death turns you into a temporary corpse until your foes pass by, while Disguise transforms you into a member of the other team for further subterfuge. Just be careful, though: Feign Death takes three seconds to cast, so you have to time it perfectly if engaged with an enemy, and your teammates can be fooled by your Disguise—only your name stays the same; your name color and class (random for Disguise) change to the enemy side. Keep in mind also that Disguise has a cooldown, and any combat action will cancel its effect.



Caution

In Feign Death mode, your name does not appear over your head. However, a perceptive opponent may see a slight movement of breath and detect your ruse in this way.



In big battles, you can royally confuse the enemy by "changing sides" with Disguise.

When sneaking around a flag area, consider inaction over action at times. If the enemy has more numbers than you, for example, let them take the flag, and when they leave you can retake the spawn point. Unless you are confident you can kill them, sometimes it's best to just wait. This works well for when you are winning, but you want to try a different strategy if you're behind on victory points.



An assassin works best one on one. If the enemy has superior numbers, it may be best to wait it out.

If you expect heavy combat, switch to offensive mode. With four experience points (third level), you can pick up Poison Dagger and its upgrade. This puts you in the same class as the archer with his Poison Arrow. Slash your opponent to disorient, then back up and cut away from the sides as your enemy swings blindly, trying to tag you. The next level up from Poison Dagger, Arterial Strike, delivers damage that slowly ticks away at your enemy's life total until he dies. Plan to hit and run with Arterial Strike, especially if you have multiple enemies in the area.



In large melee battles, hit one enemy and move to the next. It's better to stay a moving target than concentrate on finishing off one opponent.

Most of the time you'll want the straightforward stealth or offense templates, but if you want to change it up to keep the enemy on its toes, or if you plan to stay put and guard a single flag spot, you can try out the assassin traps. Your first one, Poison Orbs for three experience points, works similar to the poison gas that the priestess summons with her spell, except you can fire off yours quicker and you get three gas traps per reload. Drop the gas trap and move away quickly; after three seconds the trap is armed. It's good for defending doorways, but unfortunately it can gas your teammates—and you!—so use it wisely. Traps can also make great defense for a friendly flag. Lay the trap and wait for the enemy to enter the flag circle on their capture run and *boom*!

Caution

If you die, your assassin traps vanish, so your teammates shouldn't rely on them if there is a lot of skirmishing nearby.



Poison Orbs can affect multiple enemies, but it can also poison your

The upgrade from Poison Orbs, Triggered Poison Orbs, costs you four more experience, but gives you a whole lot more control. You can toss these bombs around (up to two active at a time), then trigger them to explode with a toggle of your mouse button. Lay one on a staircase and wait for the enemy to step on the trigger location.

Escape from chasing warrior and drop a bomb behind you.

If you're an sadist at heart, or want to steer clear of hand-to-hand combat for a while, sheath the poison daggers for some assassin traps and enjoy the fireworks.



No one expects an assassin trap in the heat of battle.

Match-ups on the Battlefield



Scurry into the shadows if all you see are ranged attackers.

Assassins are useless at range; you must close with each class and attempt to swing from the rear. Without the element of surprise, most match-ups will be a challenge. Use all the tricks at your disposal to distract and deny the enemy the best position in the battle.



Assassin vs. Archer



Dodge enemy arrows as you attempt a strike with your Poison Dagger.



All archer damage is single target, so nothing will explode around you. Archers are a bit tougher in melee range than mages—it takes a few more hits to take them down. When they shoot at you, you can dodge the arrows if you're fast enough. But they can power up their shot, and kill you with one hit. This also works in melee range, so you have to strafe fast when fighting an archer. As with all of your fights, the best way to fight an archer is to sneak up behind him and backstab.

Assassin vs. Warrior



Don't go toe to toe with a warrior; his armor sucks up your damage.



Warriors are extremely hard to beat, unless you can get behind them and backstab. If you are stealthed, or they are attacking something else, it's a little bit easier. Lock-on to them, then strafe and keep moving until you can at least swing at their sides. Attacking them from the front does zero damage. Side attacks do a little more damage, and back attacks do the most damage. And from the back, if you time it right (and you are fast enough), you can finish a warrior off with one backstab. The most important thing about fighting a warrior, though, is moving fast. A warrior can finish you off in one swing, from any angle, so if you don't move out of the way fast enough, you're dead.

Assassin vs. Priestess



Because the priestess can see you while invisible, you have to get creative to sneak up on her.



This is a difficult fight if the priestess sees you at range. Her Brambles spell can screw you up bad. It slows you down, while she runs away, turns around, and nukes you. If you try to sprint through the Brambles, you get damaged—and then die faster. However, if you can close into range, you can usually disrupt her plans to aim the Brambles spell in your direction. After that, a priestess goes down easy in a few slashes.

Assassin vs. Mage



To avoid a crispy death, try a Disguise and sneak up for the backstab.



Mages are tough from range, if they see you. It's easier if you can get them in melee range. It doesn't take much to wear them down using normal melee attacks. And if you lock-on and keep strafing, they cannot cast on you very well. When fighting a mage, it's best to wait until he is focused on somebody else before moving in to attack, unless he is already facing away from you. Whether you are using Cloak or not—they can still see you cloaked because you're moving—if you attack a mage head on, it usually means a dead assassin.

Assassin vs. Assassin



It's a blur of daggers when two assassins clash.



This is the battle of who swings faster. Because you only have melee attacks, it's a game of strafing, and the lock-on command helps as you spin and twist through the fight. If you have a Poison Dagger, switch to that; one nick will disorient the enemy assassin. Back out of the fight a step or two and approach from a different angle. The poisoned assassin will probably be swinging wildly, so you can hit and run or finish him from behind.

The Warrior

You can crush skulls with your mail fists and a swing of your wicked-looking sword. Your shield blocks missiles and bashes foreheads. Even in your armor, you can outrun most characters and launch into a leap that will cleave someone in half. The warrior does it all in-close. Just don't ask him to pick up a bow or harass an enemy at range. This is the "in your face" class for those who love the action fast and furious.



You can practically smell the sweat of foes as you close on them in combat.

I am the bravest of the brave or the "rusher" on the team—the tanking god that taunts everyone around me to bring it on. You will soon have your neck crushed if you dare to challenge me. I will take the brunt of the measly attacks for my teammates and push the battle forward in a spray of your guts and brains. I am a glistening silver hero carrying a sword that unleashes the power of my wrath on those that dare to challenge my might or spawn points. It will be my nimble dance of carefully planned and timed Quick and Stance attacks that will allow me to cleave my way to victory as my sword buries itself into your skull and your puny brains. I am designed to take and emit as much damage that your petty tools and skills can give, and I am not afraid that you target me first in the fray, for your death will be my glory.

Tips

Use your lock-on ability to keep your eyes on the enemy, and get accurate hits in to finish them quickly.

Use your Charge attack to quickly close the distance between yourself and your enemy. If the attack connects, your enemy will have just enough time to realize he's dead.

Maximize your stamina. Get close to finish your enemies, and stamina will help you run faster and longer to close the distance.

Don't leave yourself vulnerable to distance attacks. Use cover and make the enemy come to you.

Fighting another warrior? Your Quick attacks won't scratch them. Make sure you use a Stance attack to make a lasting impression. Locking on will allow you to circle the other warrior, watching for a mistake.

Move sideways to avoid charging enemies and incoming magic. Even a warrior can't take a full fireball to the face without feeling the effects. Sidestep enemies and get an attack in on their side or back for more damage per swing.

Jump in the air during combat. Your opponent will have a harder time keeping you in focus.

The Leaping Attack gets you close to an enemy and makes it harder for them to target you while you're in the air. Just watch out. It takes a full bar of stamina to execute and could leave you vulnerable if you make a mistake.

Try Calyber's Warrior build: Level up your stamina, then invest in the Charge ability. Maximize your stamina, then invest in strength and armor. Keep it simple, and keep it tough.



Frag Doll Tips

Mastering the Warrior



Sprint to catch enemies that try to run from you.

Warriors are a melee-only class. The only "range" benefit is their sprint ability, but it quickly drains stamina, leaving you exhausted if you drain your full bar. Playing an aggressive warrior requires judicious use of the sprint ability. Adding skill points to stamina and damage helps to increase the distances you can cross in the limited time and the amount of damage you can unleash once you get there. An aggressive warrior is an up-close-and-personal kind of attacker.



Aggressive warriors chop heads, while defensive warriors play bodyguard to the less-armored classes.

Warrior at a Glance

Strengths:

- Armor reduces lot of damage
- Great combination of offensive and defensive capabilities
- Deadly damage output
- Enhanced sprint allows you to close distance quickly

Weaknesses:

- Zero range capabilities
- Prey to special attacks from other classes
- Sitting duck when in melee with other warrior
- Tires easily in armor

Dealing with a warrior in close quarters is suicidal for any class. Even an opposing warrior has competition in melee. A warrior's armor sucks up damage and the big swings of his sword inflict heavy losses; it's even possible to kill two nearby opponents with a single swing.



Get caught at range and you could be dead meat.

The skirmisher warrior uses his stamina to sprint from safe spot to safe spot, using cover as a method of getting to out-of-the-way capture points to surprise the opponent, who will often expect an assassin. If you choose to pursue this strategy, load up on extra stamina for more sprinting power. Pick up your damage upgrade too. Your goal is to do as much damage as possible in a fight so that if you get taken down—maybe deep in enemy territory—your opponent is easy fodder for your allies.



A skirmisher warrior runs from cover to his intended target.

Tip

Overconfidence is also a precursor to a good backstab. When you think it's safe to move is when you should be most worried about an attack from behind.

A defensive warrior relies on shielding, as well as skill points that help his armor and shield abilities. A defensive warrior makes a good protector for a mage or priestess, as he can provide a shield that extends to his charges as well as himself. Getting close enough to use the Charge skill can take out that ranged opponent or at least make him focus on you long enough for your ally to deal the necessary damage. A warrior can also provide a temporary

health boost to his teammates through the skill Battle Cry, with the small caveat that once the skill ends, all health gained is lost. The defensive tank is a thankless role, as a fighter who is good at protecting the casters often dies before them.



On defense, Reinforced Armor upgrades protect from hand-to-hand damage and Magic Resistance stymies magical damage.

Caution

Finish a fight quickly. If you linger, even if you kill your foe, you may end up with significant wounds from an assassin's Poison Dagger or worse, the mage's Fire Orbs.

Unfortunately, the warrior fails in range. His sprint only carries him so far. His Charge and Leaping Attack skills are good at crippling, if not outright killing an opponent, but it is easy to underestimate the distance before the skill ends, and if the caster gets the ranged shot off before the warrior reaches him, he's pretty much burnt toast.



Leaping Charge finishes someone off—if you can reach him in time.

When you are not playing bodyguard, you may be out on the prowl alone for kills or flags. Sometimes you get separated from your team, or sometimes the game has already progressed a bit by the time you get on the map. The advantage to joining a game late is the enemy is not really expecting you, so you might

get that first, or even second kill, with complete surprise. If you wish to go it alone as the warrior, stay away from the middle of the field, or try to get around to the other side's edge, where you can get flag captures, and divide them to make the kills easier. Voice chat is extremely helpful—you are in a position to report enemy movement quickly, so your side can set up ambushes and defenses, keeping the opposing side in respawn mode.



The warrior can play solo for a long time with his extra armor and savage beatings in one-on-one situations.

Should you make a kill while soloing it, get away from that spot as quickly as possible. A vengeful target or friend will be hot to kill you in return. Knowing where you can hide from passing enemies is paramount when trying to solo, as you are likely to come across enemies in groups who will assist each other in killing you. You might find it easier to gain a couple of levels from getting far-reaching flag captures, but it's a lot safer for you if you are in a place where someone can back you up.



Cut down a victim, then search for a cover spot to launch your next attack.

Warrior Skills



For one skill point, Strength aids you in killing foes quicker and staying alive longer.

For the power-gamer, the road to uberness is paved with damage, lots and lots of damage. With that in mind, take Strength and extra Second Breath boosts first. Once you have five points, switch over to Leaping Attack. This powerful attack lets you jump and bring your sword crashing down on an unlucky opponent. Land just right and you one-shot kill the enemy. Against other warriors, your Combat Ready comes in handy. It's the only consistent way of dealing damage through the armor of an enemy warrior.



In combat with another warrior, quickly switch your stance to land blows that actually inflict damage.

To play a little defense, load up on your Reinforced Armor slots and buff up the Magic Resistance if you know there are mages and priestesses running around (and there almost always are!). Follow with the shield line, with the Charge at the top of the tree. Charge can be an excellent finisher if you're in close, but not close enough to reach an opponent with a sword swing. Hold up your shield in its defensive move, then trigger the Charge and you run toward your opponent like a battering ram. Strike your victim and it's lots of knockback and a one-shot kill most of the time.



The Charge looks like a defensive move to an opponent, but it's a well-disguised assault.

To round out the true team-player warrior, pick up Last Stand and Battle Cry. Last Stand temporarily boosts your health when you need a quick mend to finish someone off, and Battle Cry does the same for the whole team; however, both go away after a small duration and then you lose the benefits.



Last Stand injects you with extra life temporarily to win a fight, but the life gain drains away after time.

For the skirmisher warrior, the extra Stamina boost is a must, but accompany it with whatever skills the warrior wishes to fall back on if discovered. In general, stick to the Reinforced Armor, Magic Resistance, and Safeguard skills to reduce potential damage. With your increased stamina, you should outrun most opponents and the extra defense will absorb a stray hit or two.



With a full complement of Reinforced Armor, Magic Resistance, and Safeguard, the warrior can go anywhere prepared.



Match-ups on the Battlefield



Prepare game plans against enemy classes so you won't have to think too hard in the heat of the moment.



Out on the battlefield, a warrior is always be engaged with someone—that's his job, after all. As a result, master your core match-ups, because much of your action will be split-second decision making. When in doubt, charge the enemy and pull no punches.

Warrior vs. Archer



Throw up your shield to deflect enemy arrows.



He who holds the best position wins. If the archer spots you from afar and can let fly a few arrows, you'll probably be a smear or you'll use up a ton of stamina reaching him, at which point he can escape. Throw up your shield at all times to try to deflect incoming arrows. Stick to cover and make that last sprint when you're sure you can catch him with a broad stroke.



One sprint brings your sword in range of an archer.

Warrior vs. Assassin



Punish an assassin that attacks you from the front.



A fast assassin may run rings around you, and poison can turn your world into a nightmare—literally, if you get a full dose of the disorientation poison. The assassin's ability to Cloak can fool you into exposing your rear flank, so the warrior has to constantly be on his toes to see the shimmer that betrays the assassin's proximity. Keep the assassin in front of you and you won't take much damage, plus your attacks will inflict big chunks of life loss. Use the lock-on ability to ensure that the assassin doesn't slip behind you.



Face your assassin at all times and you'll win.

Warrior vs. Priestess



A priestess's Brambles put you in a bad spot, but otherwise the spell caster should go down easily.



This match-up is no contest most of the time. Yes, if you get stuck in a Brambles field, the priestess may whittle you down with Corrupt after Corrupt or someone else might come to her rescue. Slip free of the Brambles, though, and a single charge will put you in butchering range.

Watch out for Blindness, and avoid the nasty and unforgiving Poison Cloud. Dodge these obstacles and you should close easily enough to make short work of the female spell caster in two or three swings.



Watch out for the priestess's dangerous Corrupt spell.

Warrior vs. Mage



Metal armor plus Lightning Bolt equals respawn.



Remember, you're wearing metal armor that can become a lightning rod for a mage with steady aim.

Avoid the long-range bomb and you can smash up a mage really quickly. Use cover to your advantage and then charge and strafe in one long run to your target. Magic Resistance armor significantly increases your survival odds against a mage, as does one strong slash from behind.



Magic Resistance beefs up your armor to go up against mages.

Warrior vs. Warrior

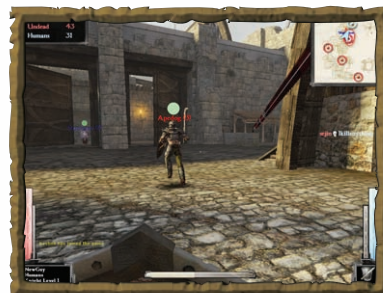


It might be a long fight when you go visor to visor with another warrior.



Don't swing wildly and hope to score damage against another armored warrior. This conflict comes down to stances. Match your opponent's stance to block damage, then when you see an opening, switch stances and cut a new hole in the enemy's fancy armor. If the attack hits, you hear it in the other warrior's pain. If he dodges it, you hear a clang. When fighting another warrior, unless you are using a special move, avoid draining your stamina, as you may need it to close the distance of any help that

may come his way. As in your battle with the assassin, keep the enemy warrior in front of you at all times, but if you can strafe and cut away at the sides, go for it!



A thrust from behind will deal significantly more damage to the enemy warrior.

The Priestess

With a wave of her hand, she can close a companion's wound, or rip open a new one in an enemy across the screen. The priestess enjoys a wealth of versatile spells and abilities, and she's the lynchpin of team play—it's not her good looks that gravitate her teammates to her side, but her healing talents and combat-manipulating effects. Where the other spell caster, the mage, clocks in on the offensive side, the priestess primarily assists on defense. She'll permanently deal with those pesky intruders who think she's a "soft target."



Keep a priestess nearby for quick heals and a trusty Brambles spell.

Do not turn your eyes away from me for a second. I am the savior of the dead in this battle for your life and you will be quickly obliterated. I am the protector and the healer of my fellow comrades and it will be me that will take them to glory. Do not dare to call me a support character for I am far more than that and you will soon understand why I should be the most feared by your kind. While I may be at the back of the battle, my Corrupt and Blindness spells will have you shrinking in fear as I advance to eat your souls—souls that I savor and yearn for. My healing spheres and cures will have my teammates on their knees thanking me for saving their lives, as they are nothing without me. My pulsating pool of Brambles spell will keep any of you at a dissonance and your small, petty minds will be hurting as you try to think of a way to get near my gloriousness before a blast of light occurs and my fallen comrades are all simultaneously resurrected from the dead to assist *me* in finishing off your worthless lives. The lives of my teammates are mine to grant and it is my duty to uphold them. Do not think I won't sacrifice my own health to project it to my charges, as I do not fear you have what it takes to finish me. I am the propeller of our certain victory, and beware assassin, because you are my first target!

Tips

You are the guardian of your team. Stay away from the fighting. You can do more good healing from a distance than you can dying in the middle of the battlefield.

Mark assassins to negate their Cloak ability and set your teammates on their trail. Anyone who kills the marked target gets extra experience as a bonus.

Casting a Restoration Sphere over a battlefield not only helps your teammates, it hurts your enemies! Make sure it's not buried in the ground to get the maximum benefit.

Use Brambles around chokepoints or to slow warriors and assassins charging at you. Either they're slowed and easy pickings for a friendly archer or mage, or they suffer the damaging consequences of trying to keep up the speed. Throwing Brambles also gives you time to retreat to safety.

Resurrection brings your dead teammates back to life and sends them back into the fray. A word of caution: When you die, so does everyone you've resurrected. When their lives depend on yours, keep clear of the open conflict.

Eat the souls of your dead enemies after you've learned the Resurrection ability for quick leveling, and it prevents them from being resurrected by their own priestess.

Corrupt may not be equal to a Mage's fireball, but if you've got a wounded attacker, it might be enough to turn the tide in your favor.

Try Valkyrie's Priestess build: Invest in healing abilities to keep your teammates alive, then pick up Brambles and Resurrection, along with Soulmark. If you've got any points left, play around with Blindness and Poison Cloud. Who said priestesses were all kittens and rainbows?



Frag Doll Tips

Mastering the Priestess



Restore or Corrupt? It's the question every priestess must answer as she climbs levels.



No other class is a better team player than the priestess. As a well-balanced support class, her heals and Resurrection can save the day, while the priestess's Corrupts are very deadly. With sharp eyes and special magical attunement, the priestess is the only class who can see cloaked assassins, and she can mark them with a red outline to point them out to other team members.

Priestess at a Glance

Strengths:

- Powerful Corrupt and Brambles spell to damage and hinder
- Only class to see Cloaked assassins
- Can mark targets for identification and extra experience
- Resurrection allows faster recovery for dead teammates

Weaknesses:

- Very poor melee skills
- Preferred target of the enemy
- Specialization severely limits skill set
- Experience as support class generally slower



Stay behind cover or teammates as you lay down support fire.

The priestess's melee skills are very weak and she does not do well at all in toe-to-toe confrontations. Even when she throws up a Stone Skin spell, an enemy warrior can squash her like a grape, so her combat game plan should be to stay behind cover and avoid the line of fire from enemy archers and mages.

The priestess can build in one of two directions—as an offensive Corrupt-thrower or as a defensive team healer. Your ultimate choice depends on play style, team make-up, and enemy team make-up.



Land several Corrupt spells to drop an enemy.



You won't get much glory for kills or flag captures as the priestess, but your teammates will because of you.

A cautious player who feels most comfortable with conservative play—or someone just starting out as a priestess for the first time—naturally gravitates toward the defensive healer who focuses on becoming a cure specialist at the expense of offensive spells. They also are very important on the battlefield because a priestess can single-handedly turn a battle by healing allies that should be dead, giving someone two or three lives in battle makes a huge difference!

This priestess can heal her teammates very well over longer distances, but she is unable to effectively Corrupt or cripple enemy targets in combat. She must focus all her energies toward her teammates and stay under cover so she does not become a target for the enemy. The defensive strategy becomes most effective when the enemy team relies on lots of heavy hitters that engage in direct melee with your team. Your job is to keep your team alive so they can win the glory of capturing flags and dispatching enemies.



Even if a Corrupt doesn't kill the enemy, it detours them off their present course searching for cover.



The offensive build focuses on becoming a Corrupt specialist. This priestess has less effective cure spells and a shorter range on her healing power. An offensive priestess's strength lies in laying Corrupts upon the enemy team that seriously hinder their efforts toward taking your team's flags. When your team does not need your heals to keep them alive, taking the offensive route can be fun, as you'll find great enjoyment in watching your victims writhe under the power of your Corrupts.



A power-neutral priestess wields Restores and Corrupt equally effectively.



A balanced approach—that is, staying power neutral—does not give either advantages or disadvantages in spells. This strategy has its uses, however. If you need to both keep your team alive and help kill the enemy, it makes sense to keep your skills balanced. Your base heals and Corrupts hit in a mid range, healing or harming 15–20 points each cast, respectively.



Think defense as the priestess, whether it's keeping a teammate alive or running from an angry enemy.



Because her Corrupts are so deadly and her heals can swing the balance of battle so readily, the priestess *will* be a major target of the enemy team. Most warriors and assassins can't resist the temptation of closing on an "easy" kill. Keep in mind that, while you'll be supporting your teammates with heals and the like, they may not support you. An archer that has an enemy closing quickly on his position won't suddenly swing around to clip the assassin closing on you. You have to learn how to use the priestess's defensive powers to avoid damage, and don't be afraid to duck behind stronger teammates for protection or fall back if the opportunity presents itself.



Leave mana for a self-heal in the case of sudden damage.

Priestess Skills



Unlike the mage, where both his main trees provide potent offensive spells, the priestess tree splits you between offense and defense; choose wisely.

The Priestess

Unlike some of the other classes, the skill choices you make with the priestess radically alter how you perform in the game. Even so, there are some basic considerations at low level.



In large games, choose Soulmark at level three to aid your team in seeing invisible assassins.



At third level, you gain four skill points. Unless you have a very specific plan in mind, spend them in this fashion: Brambles (two points), Stone Skin (one point), and one specialist point (which you can remove after you gain another level if you want to switch focus). In a larger game with multiple assassins running around, opt out of the specialist point for Soulmark to better identify the stealthy assassin to your teammates.



Brambles cuts down on an opponent's movement and allows you to get off more Corrupts.



Tip

For two skill points, Brambles makes an excellent defensive weapon and may also set you up for the kill.

Brambles is your staple spell in almost any priestess build. It plays great defense for you as it reduces movement speed; if you have stamina left to sprint and an opponent is trapped in the slowed area, you can run away and escape. Also, Brambles deals

damage to anyone sprinting through the area, so spring that on warriors attempting to close. For a Corrupt-oriented priestess, Brambles holds your foes to a certain area, thus enabling your Corrupts to land more frequently.



If melee combat is unavoidable, cast Stone Skin to help reduce the inevitable damage.



Your robe needs help in the damage-reduction department, and that's where Stone Skin shows up. Throw this up whenever you expect damage, and it'll help stem the blood flow.



Tip

Stone Skin isn't just for you. Think about it if your team is heavy on warriors, because the armor allows them to absorb more damage.

The final low-level point generally goes to your specialist tree. Once you make your decision on the healing side or the cursing side, this extra point aids in delivering a more potent spell of the chosen side. Use it freely early to pump up one side or the other, but remember that you can opt out of it later for other skill sets.



A Restoration Sphere hinders an enemy approach.

At mid-level, continue with your specialization and pick the appropriate skills. Healing has two trees to choose from: the Restoration Sphere and Resurrection. For three points, the Restoration Sphere can be a great battle tool. Throw up the bubble in a hotly contested spot, and it becomes a safe haven for your teammates who heal back to full after standing

inside for a few seconds. It also deals Corrupt damage to enemies entering the bubble, which either keeps them at bay or chips away at life totals for foes already engaged in combat inside the bubble.



One Mass Restoration can boost your life totals high enough to win multiple battles at once.

Four points above the Restoration Sphere, Mass Restoration goes without saying as the prime healing talent for a priestess. Rather than concentrate on one teammate, Mass Restoration aids all your friends at once. In an evenly matched battle, a Mass Restoration can turn the tide in your favor when wounded companions suddenly get a new lease on life.



Caution

Though Resurrection can be timely in a short battle, your dead teammates respawn after 15 seconds anyway. It's a luxury skill, not a necessity, unless your team specializes in melee fighters.



Stay back from the fight after casting a Resurrection spell. If you die, the person you just saved will die too and all will be lost.

The other healing tree, Resurrection and Mass Resurrection, should come next. Unlike the Restoration Sphere, Resurrection is a luxury spell. True enough, it can pop a dead teammate back into the fight and turn the battle instantly in your favor, and for that reason alone it's worth having. However, dead teammates respawn after 15 seconds, and you may even be next to a friendly spawn point when they do, so they'll be back before you know it. Also, if you die after Resurrecting someone, they die too (they're magically bound to you, after all), so it's not a perfect solution.



Mass Resurrection can bring an army suddenly to life, but it's very difficult to figure when to cast it.

Mass Resurrection can be difficult to pull off. You don't always know when to maximize its effect. It doesn't make sense to trigger it with only one of your allies down, but maybe you can't see the rest. Are they dead, out of sight, winning the battle? Plus, you lose a chunk of life when you cast the spell, which may be a big deal in the middle of combat. As with the minor Resurrection, its big brother also links to you—if you die, so do all the teammates you resurrected.



Poison Cloud cripples anyone foolish enough to pass through its vapors.

The offensive persuasion takes you over to the Poison Cloud tree. Three levels of Poison Cloud can ensure that no one's breathing properly on the enemy side. It takes a few moments to summon the cloud, which you can do at medium range, but it functions

The Priestess

much the same as the archer's Poison Arrow and the assassin's Poison Dagger, dealing strong damage and disorienting a target who simply walks through it.



Blindness turns the victim's screen completely black and leaves him a sitting duck for another teammate or your Corrupt.

One level up from Poison Cloud, Blindness takes someone out of the battle. It's a quick cast, and if you raise it to its maximum effect, the target can't see more than a black screen with blurred names where opponents once were. It's a great set-up spell for your Corrupt.

Of course, you can always stay neutral until higher level when you have more skill points to distribute. A balanced progression focuses on Restore spells, Stone Skin, and Corrupts equally, filling out the basic rack of spells within the first 5–10 levels. A defensive priestess, however, would focus hard on heals and specialization early, while an offensive priestess would opt for filling up Poison Cloud and Blindness, as well as early specialization in Corrupt. The fast, dirty, and workable build for the player who wants to level up quickly is the neutral road—choose Brambles, Soulmark, and Stone Skin up to third level, then focus on filling out Restore/Corrupt and Resurrection/Poison Cloud to level 5. After level 5, the player needs to decide on a path.

Of course, your team make-up and battle conditions can alter everything. For example, if you are grouped with a lot of melee fighters who are fielding a lot of



A good priestess patching up wounded teammates gives you multiple lives in a single spawn.

damage, specialize in cures right away, forgo Poison Cloud and Blindness, and pick up Resurrection by level 4. Add Restoration Sphere by level 5. This keeps your assassins and warriors alive longer, which should control the battle.

Match-ups on the Battlefield



Keep your distance from all classes to improve your chance for success.



For most priestesses, the idea is not to have any head-to-head fights at all. In the heat of battle, though, it's inevitable that an arrow will whiz by your head or a warrior will come knocking on your fortification. Prepare as best you can for these challenges where it's just you versus another class.

Priestess vs. Archer



Lay down a Brambles field around an archer if you get to medium range.



The archer's arrow can kill you with one shot to the head, so watch out for sneak attacks at range. If you can see the archer and have good legs, it will be a long battle but you should win. Your Corrupts land if you just see the archer, while his arrow has to hit

you dead-on. In tighter, cast Brambles immediately and let Corrupt do the rest. A blind archer has almost no chance of landing a kill shot on you, so switch to your offensive tree if you have time.

Priestess vs. Assassin



An assassin should not sneak up on you; after all, you are the only class to see through his invisibility Cloak.

The advantage goes to the priestess, as long as you're paying attention. As the only class that can see a cloaked assassin, you shouldn't be surprised by an assassin unless he comes from behind. Once you spot him, mark him for your team, then cast Brambles in his general area. With an assassin's feet tangled in brambles, you can lay on the Corrupt and sprint backward to avoid those nasty blades. If he does get in close, dodge and heal as you look for a quick escape route.

Priestess vs. Warrior



Blind a warrior and run for some trusty steel from friends.

Uh oh. The warrior can kill you faster than you can twiddle your fingers for a heal. Again, Brambles is your best friend. If you can impede the charging warrior, and your dancing skills are top notch, you can work around the warrior and Corrupt him to death. Unfortunately, the warrior may have more stamina than the average character, which means he can sprint to you faster. A Blindness can also delay the squashing, but don't stick around to

battle it out; you need to escape a warrior's clutches as soon as you can sprint.

Priestess vs. Mage



Unlike the other class match-ups, you may want to close a little on the mage due to his superior ranged damage spells.

This is another tough match-up. A smart mage will not close with you, which means you can keep those brambles in your back pocket. If you move around well enough, it's possible to drain him slowly with Corrupt, or you may be able to outlast him if you heal back minor hits. Still, the mage has a better arsenal than you, and his damage hits just as hard from across the screen as point-blank range. Depending on the battle conditions, you may want to advance on a mage to get him into Brambles and Poison Cloud range.

Priestess vs. Priestess



Corrupt generally wins over Restore in a mirror match.

Generally, a Corrupt specialist will win this contest. Watch out for Brambles; the priestess who gets her feet caught will probably go down first. Whichever priestess lands a trick—a Blindness to the face or a Poison Cloud trap—also has the advantage. Save mana for self-healing, because it may come down to a catfight and the one with leftover mana might survive the last shot.

The Mage

The mage serves up deep-fried specials, whether it's with a singe of a Fireball or the char of some skin courtesy of a Lightning Bolt, but his defense isn't much better than papier-mâché. In close, the mage better have his Fire Orbs ready or he's toast; the staff just doesn't cut it unless he's up against a similarly equipped priestess or enemy mage. When you want a ranged specialist who has the luxury of going commando armed with Fire Orbs, look to the guys with the funny robes.



Think offense while playing defense with the mage and his blistering spells.

If you should beware of anyone in this game, you would prove yourself smarter than you look to beware of me. I am the fiercest and most ferocious long-range damage dealer your sights have ever had the horror of seeing, and you will not see it for very long. My range is long and my shots are accurate, and soon you will find an end to your worthless life, my enemy. I will be on the outskirts emitting intense amounts of damage in an array of colors and lights that burst around our petty souls. My missiles and spheres of power will envelope you and you will not even know from whence I shot them, as you will be an exploding pool of puss on the wall. I call the power of fire and lightning to my fingertips. Do not think I won't sacrifice my teammates should I have to opportunity to take more of you out than them with my Chain Lighting coming forth from my awe inspiring hands. My mana is my greatest friend. I have more of it than you could possibly have nightmares about, and it will provide me with the most supreme power of the gods and guide my team to victory.

Tips

If you're a sharpshooter, invest in lightning spells. They're powerful, but require precision to have effect. Fire spells move slower, but they have a larger field of damage.

You're not built for physical combat, so keep out of sword range and keep cover nearby in case an archer starts pumping arrows into you.

You can direct fire-based spells as they travel through the air. Keep your cursor over an enemy, even if they're moving, and your spell will follow the guide.

Chain Lightning won't stop with damaging one target. It will keep going to whoever's nearby. Just be careful, because it doesn't care if its next target is your teammate or your enemy! A word of caution: hold it too long while you try to aim and it will discharge through you instead!

Some spells have splash damage. Even if you can't directly hit an enemy, hitting a wall or the ground nearby can still cause them a world of pain. It's especially good against shielded warriors.

If one of your Fire Orbs hits an enemy, that's it. They're dead. If the Fire Orb doesn't stick to anything, it will act like a grenade and blow up, damaging anyone in its vicinity.

A Magic Shield can protect you from incoming spells as you move from place to place, but don't try to cast your own spells inside it!

Try Jinx's Mage build: Go straight down the lightning spell line, maximizing your electric personality. Then pump up your mana and recovery speed. If you've got any points left to spend, pick up a Magic Shield.



Frag Doll Tips

Mastering the Mage



Get away from Eldritch Arrow as soon as you can and upgrade to a real spell, like Lightning Bolt.



The mage can be an offensive machine. The problem? He starts with Eldritch Arrow, which has a tough time picking off mosquitoes. Forget about taking down healthy opponents with the mage's starting spell; even wounded opponents usually take three or four hits. You need to upgrade to a more potent weapon right away.

Mage at a Glance

Strengths:

- Powerful and easy-to-use abilities
- Fast rate of fire
- Guided ranged attacks
- Diverse combat abilities for offense and defense

Weaknesses:

- Low hit points
- Spells can inflict friendly casualties
- Pincushion for Assassins
- Really weak at the beginning



It's possible to dance around opponents early; however, you're better off going for capture points as the mage.



Unless you can run circles around the competition, think capture points over carnage in the beginning. Plan to tackle at least a few capture points to gain the necessary experience boost to reach at least third level. With four skill points you can purchase your second-rank spells with a point left over for Magic Shield or a specialist skill.

Hustle for the closest neutral capture point at the start of the battle. Unlike some of your companions, you shouldn't go for the neutral capture points closest to the enemy zone unless you have help. You don't match well against most of the other starting classes and you absolutely cannot afford to die before you flip that first few capture points. If you fail to score experience on that first capture point, you'll respawn and the easy flags will be claimed. Then it's earning experience through kills with your Eldritch Arrow, which isn't a picnic.

Caution

You have a limited amount of mana, so concentrate on one target, regenerate your mana, and then move on to the next victim.

Once all the "free" capture points have been gobbled up, gear up for some defense by guarding a friendly flag or trailing some competent teammates. Assuming you're not out hunting enemies, find a place near a friendly capture point that will protect you from the archer but give you enough time to react to the assassin or warrior showing up. You gain experience just by killing them, and eventually your auto-death spells will make it virtually impossible for them to take anything away from your team. Look for vantage points either high up where



If you can light your hand on fire, it's go-time for the mage.



Don't try to attack multiple enemies until you have a few skill points under your belt.

you can see a lot of the area or just inside a building doorway or archway so your enemies will not see you right away as they enter. In tight, make sure you're far enough away that you do not blow yourself up along with the opposing team, as many of your abilities will also kill you if your target is too close. Fortunately you still get experience for deathblows even if you die in the process.

Once you gain a better spell (anything above Flame Arrow or Lightning Shock), you can play offense. Use cover where you can, and remember to weave as you launch your ranged attacks at the enemy. The lightning tree does extra damage to take out foes faster, while the fire tree allows you to guide your shots. Fire spells can be particularly effective in obstacle-filled terrain, as you can steer the fire around boulders and through archways. Lightning spells are out-and-out deadly if you have good, quick aim.



You can curve a Flame Arrow around a large obstacle to strike your unsuspecting foe.



Tip

Lightning is more mana-intensive than your fire spells, and it recharges more slowly, but it is deadly accurate.

In open terrain, rely on your ranged bombs such as Fireball and Lightning Bolt. They may take longer to cast, but they do much more damage. Up close, switch to spells you can control such as Flame Arrow, Lightning Shock, and Fire Orbs. Spells that go "boom" are not a good idea when your friends are around. Plus, your close-combat spells charge faster, and you need that quick reload to deal with an unexpected enemy or two.



Load up the Fireball or Lightning Bolt in the open terrain.



The mage becomes dominant at level four and higher. Once you reach your top-tier spells, particularly Fire Orbs and mass-damage spells such as Chain Lightning, you can fearlessly charge out with the rest of them. Where an archer may have trouble dealing with multiple bogies, a high-level mage can slaughter three or four without even going through all his mana. Some of the lightning spells can be charged up for bigger blasts, but if you overload, you'll die.



The mage becomes one of the deadliest classes once he reaches fourth level.



Mage Skills



Don't get stuck without mana or you'll have to break out the staff, and more than likely, someone will break your head.



A split personality with the mage leads to disaster. From your first skill point, choose one on the two main skill branches—fire or lightning. If you split your skill points, you'll undercut your skill growth and end up with basically a duplicate spell at each level. Both the fire branch and the lightning branch advance at the same rate, so one really isn't any more expensive than the other.

You probably want to go fire initially so you can control the Flame Arrow to great effect. Fast and accurate, Flame Arrow bolts are very useful for when you know someone is coming, but aren't sure from where. You can fire them, then worry about targeting the head later. Against assassins, go with Lightning Shock, as it snakes around on the ground until it hits something and exposes that annoying invisible stalker. With a few skill points accumulated, you can switch to Lightning Bolt and really fry your victims.

If you can't immediately jump to the next spell and have leftover points, buy Quicker Regen and Magic Affinity. They enable you to fire as fast as most of your spells allow. Unload Flame Arrow to your heart's content and never run out of mana.

With your skill points mounting, spend them on one side or the other and climb that tree as quickly as possible. Once you reach the third tier (Fire Orbs and Lightning Sphere), you can square off against any opponent and frequently take out multiples. Hit the top with Fireblast and Chain Lightning and you can fry the whole battlefield. Not only do those spells burn for massive damage, but Fireblast "sticks" to a target, continuing to burn away the enemy's remaining life, and Chain Lightning bounces from nearby enemy to nearby enemy.



The fire tree enables you to move your fire spells in midair.



Caution

Watch where you fire those giant mage spells. Your friends can be hurt or killed just as easily as the enemy when you launch a Fireblast or Chain Lightning spell.

You also have mage specialties to consider. You begin in the neutral position and can spend one skill point to move in either direction. Click on the fire side to deal more fire damage and less lightning damage, and vice versa for the lightning side. Click twice and you deal considerably more damage on that side and significantly reduce damage on the other side.



The lightning tree gives you maximum damage per spell.



A lightning specialist zaps for more lightning damage and less fire damage.



It's better to gain your new spells before worrying about your specialties. If you have trouble gaining those early levels and need to rely on kills for experience, then you might want to pump a point into your specialty to boost the damage-per-hit totals. Otherwise, wait until you max out your spells on one side of the tree.



Tip

The mage's best defense is a hot offense. Steer clear of Magic Shield unless you plan on a lot of running and flag capturing, and not much combat.



When you earn some skill points, spend them on your spells before trying out your specialties.

Once you climb to the top of fire or lightning, you can buy Magic Shield. Your main defensive spell costs a point and provides some magical armor (reduces roughly 75 percent of incoming damage, though a priestess's Corrupt and an archer's arrow will go right through it). Also, keep in mind that you can't fire out of your Magic Shield spell.



Magic Shield is a luxury skill. Buy it only after you equip your offensive spells.

Your play style determines whether you become a fire mage or a lightning mage. Dream of twisting a Fireball down a corridor? Want to shock and awe the approaching army? Control or all-out damage will steer you on your path.



Let your play style determine if you want to learn how to sling fire or shoot lightning.



That said, Lightning Bolt is your best option at mid-level experience for a mage looking to rack up kills. The Bolt kills quickly, even versus warriors in their thick armor shell. At a step higher on the experience ladder, Fire Orbs can transform your mage into melee machine. Each Fire Orb is a close- to medium-ranged fire grenade that sticks to an opponent and deals a lethal blow no matter his armor, level, or fancy moves. You serve up three at a time before you need to re-cast the spell, so that's probably three dead enemies. To power through your opponents, blast them with Lightning Bolt at range or singe their whiskers with a little Fire Orb action.



A secluded spot gives you more time to react to changing events.



Match-ups on the Battlefield



You'll face opponents near and far, so learn your optimum class strategies.



Assuming player skill levels are equal, the mage will struggle a bit early on, then take over the game later. Still, some class-to-class match-ups are tougher than others.

Mage vs. Archer



The mage has more tools than the archer at range.

The mage has the advantage over the archer in most situations. Both rely on range; however, the mage has a higher rate of fire and many tricks up his sleeves. An archer can do a lot of damage to a mage with a single hit—a Poison Arrow takes off about three-quarters of your life—and he generally out-damages the mage per hit at early levels. But can the archer curve an arrow around a pillar or blast a whole area with a single shot? Nope. At higher levels, the mage improves the odds of striking and slaying an archer because of all the mage's fancy special effects.



In close the mage can usually fire faster than the archer.

When confronting an archer one on one, use your Fireball or Ball Lighting to pepper him with damage from afar. If you can hit in the ballpark, you can wound or destroy the archer before one of his arrows lands. You're even better equipped than the archer in tight. Switch to Fire Orbs, or one of your quicker spells such as Flame Arrow or Lightning Shock, and barrage him. So long as you don't run dry on mana, you can fire quicker than the archer can, and it should make the difference.

Mage vs. Assassin



Depending on whether it's range or close combat, the mage will dominate or die versus an assassin.

The assassin is your worst enemy. He works on stealth, so if he sneaks up on you, you're probably dead. In close combat, the assassin has the edge—his blades slice and dice even faster than your nimble fingers can volley those low-level spells. Plus, the assassin can coat his blades with poison and disorient you during the attack. A well-placed Fire Orb can save you, or you can sprint away for a second or two to give you room to change the encounter to range and whip out a quick Lightning Bolt.



Take the high ground against a melee-armed opponent.

At range, there's not much the assassin can do to you. Take your pick of one of your exploding spells, or hunt him down with heat-seeking Flame Arrows. As long as you maintain your distance, you have the edge every time.

Mage vs. Warrior



To avoid getting knocked around by a warrior, keep your distance.

The warrior can give a mage fits. Much like the assassin, the warrior has a strong advantage in tight with the lightly armored mage. Give a warrior a few free swings and a mage becomes a puddle. Even worse, a warrior with a few points in Magic Resistance will definitely cut down on a mage's damage. Don't expect those glancing blows to kill a magic-ready warrior.

As with the assassin, you should sprint away from a closing warrior, then turn and fire. Keep moving and pepper the warrior with a spray of quick spells or one powerful Lightning Bolt. If you can stay at range and line up a few shots, you can prevail. Just remember, though: The sword is mightier than the staff.



Lightning proves effective against warriors due to its higher damage potential.

Mage vs. Priestess



The mage leans toward the offensive side, while the priestess has more defense in her arsenal.



When the two magic classes collide, the mage should land on his feet, ready for the next opponent. The priestess is primarily a support class, so it's no big surprise that your mage spells deal more damage and hit for larger effects. A priestess's Corrupt can cut you down, except your spells should have the priestess on the run and unable to focus on a Corrupt.



Hide behind an obstacle to sever a priestess's Corrupt.

Against a priestess, launch a continuous barrage to keep the healer moving and unable to target you for long. At the same time, never stand still; it makes locking on with a Corrupt more difficult for the priestess. If you overwhelm her right away, you can cut a priestess in two fairly quickly. Don't let her breathe. Give her a second to recover and she'll heal back to full and retaliate with a nasty Corrupt.

Mage vs. Mage



Draw out an enemy mage's mana, then move in for the kill.



Mage on mage can be lots of fireworks. At high levels, fireballs and chunks of lightning shoot back and forth, and lots of "innocent" bystanders may get hurt in the process. It generally comes down to your movement and targeting skills in combat. If it looks like an even fight, try suckering the enemy mage into launching a few ill-advised attacks, suck up all his mana, and then move in with your still-ready kill spells.

Circumstances dictate your strategy. Play around the map terrain and watch your opponent's movement for some habits you might exploit. If he tends to retreat to a fortified location, for example, whip out a Fireball and home in on that "defensive" position like a cruise missile.



The mirror match of mage on mage comes down to whoever has more combat grace or whoever has sunk the most points in the right skills.

Stonehelm



HOTSPOTS:

- The Causeway
- The Ramparts
- Siege Tower
- Main Gate
- The Market Square
- Long walkway up to the Bridge Gate
- Dock Area
- Inner Gate

Hotspots are frequently contested areas that hold key tactical value.

Lay of the Land

The Humans own all of Stonehelm, the mighty city that serves as the last bastion against the Undead. The northern half of the map stands as the walled city; the southern half lies mostly wide open, with only the outcast Undead as its inhabitants. It's a map tilted in favor of the Humans because if they lose here, the Campaign is all over with the Undead victorious.

The Humans



Guard the front gate if you want to keep attackers from charging the main gate.

You might think that having a six to one flag advantage over the Undead puts you in the driver's seat. If you play a defensive game you can throttle your opponents, but if you play a loose game, you could be in for some tough times.

You begin with six flags: Inner Gate, Sanctuary, West Precinct, Slums, Bridge Gate and the Main Gate. That's a lot of territory, and you don't really need any more. Holding six flags to the Undead's one will quickly wind down their points and earn you a victory. In other words, don't go running after them. You want to play defense and hold the majority of flags to win the round. But how do you keep them all?



Sniper points above the main gate and along the ramparts will give you the edge if you're a ranged attacker.

Push up to the front of the city and cut off all avenues into the city. Ideally, you want to cut down the Undead before they can reach your closer flags like the Main Gate and the Bridge Gate, but even if you can't stop them, you need to figure out which way they're headed. Let your team know where the Undead forces have amassed, and listen to the audio clues as flags become under attack. A team working together and predicting where the Undead will strike next should slow down their charge and keep the flags in your favor.

Use cover spots like corners and archways to ambush your opponents.



Tip

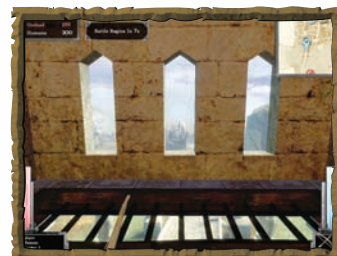
Look for good sniping spots on the ramparts. A mage, especially with a guided Fireball, can pick off Undead targets before they reach the city walls.

Watch the siege tower for a sudden enemy advance.



Early on you want to play defense along the ramparts or in the southern section of the city. From the ramparts, you can look down on the field that the Undead start in and track their initial movements. The Undead will use the huge siege tower to reach the top of the city walls; ranged defenders like archers and mages, if positioned correctly on the ramparts, can destroy aggressors before they penetrate the defenses. Even a priestess's Brambles spell can slow the attack long enough to plug the defense with new recruits.

Your melee specialists will help tremendously too. You can send a warrior or assassin out into the field to cut down Undead as they attempt to push the large siege tower. A player pushing the siege tower is extremely vulnerable, and one cloaked assassin can single-handedly backstab the operators and cripple the siege tower's movement. Even if you don't leave the city, your melee combatants can plug up the siege tower ramp when the Undead finally land atop the walls.



The ramparts above the city entrance give you many attack angles.



let you shoot straight down on enemies pounding on the door.

If the Undead charge toward the main gate at any point, look for the section of the ramparts just above the city entrance. You can shoot out the windows at enemies in the distance, and the grate in the floor will



Send an attack squad out the front door, but don't let anyone else back in.



If you want to take the battle to the Undead, you can try a quick assault out the main gates. Have someone open the door, send a few troops out to harass the enemy, and then quickly shut the door behind them so no Undead get in. Attackers can also exit the city via the secret corridor in the well.



[Human players can hop down into the well and reach the field through a hole in the outer wall.



Once the Undead enter the city, don't get caught running around. If you're in transit between flags, the Undead might flip flags and open up more flag deeper in the city. Pay attention to which flags the

Undead control. If they own the main gate, they can only attack West Precinct, Bridge Gate, and Slums. Once they advance on one of those three middle flags, they can then attack the Inner Gate flag. Only after they conquer the Inner Gate flag can the Undead go after the Sanctuary flag. You have a roadmap of their eventual route, so play defense accordingly.



The causeways will help you reach the upper-level flags or serve as sniper spots for passing enemies.

Remember, you only need to hold four of the flags to guarantee victory; if one falls, and you keep it to one, you still win. It's a matter of keeping one step ahead of the Undead in the flag race.



Leap across the broken stairs to reach the northern section of the city.

As the Undead begin to take over flags deeper in Stonehelm, double back and retake the earlier flags. Your main priority is keeping your edge in flags throughout the course of the battle.



Stonehelm



Levers and winches will open up sections of the city, but remember that once you open a gate or a door, your enemies can pass through as well.



Should the Undead penetrate deep into the city, regroup and decide as a team whether you want to take the offensive and retake the lost flags or defend the remaining flags better. In the middle portion of the city, you can hit-and-run easily through the city streets, from walkways and ledges, running to and from the flags.

Stay high near the Inner Gate so you can get the drop on any enemies.

In the northern section of the map, you have a huge advantage if you want to defend the Sanctuary. It can only be reached by using a ranged attack (like an arrow) to hit the lever on the right side of the expanse over the pit area. This triggers a magical bridge to form and grant access to the back flag.



The stairs along the northern wall lead down into The Pit.

On the far side of the bridge, you can circle up to the balcony that overlooks the Inner Gate. From this stone porch, you can survey the entire Inner Gate courtyard

and pick off targets with a ranged attack. On the opposite side, the stairs lead down to the platform with the bridge lever. If the bridge is up and enemies are coming, sprint down to this lever to drop the bridge and prevent a rush on the Sanctuary.



The secret lever raises the magic bridge to some sniper spots and the hidden Sanctuary city section.



It's possible that someone could sneak up on your back flag. If you want to warn your surrounding companions, the bell in the Sanctuary church actually works. Just run up to the rope next to the flag and stand near it. The bell chimes should give enough warning to your nearby allies to aid in the defense of the back flag. You must keep that one your own, so drop everything and hustle to the north if the Sanctuary is under siege.



If the enemy infiltrates the Sanctuary, you can sound the alarm with the bell in the church.



The Undead

To win as the Undead, you must infiltrate the Stonehelm outer wall.

With one lone flag outside the city gates, the Undead have their collective work cut out for them on this map.

Obviously, you can't sit back and wait for the victory to come to you. Your only strategy is to rush the city.

It all starts with the siege tower. You must wheel the big tower all the way across the field to lean up against the city wall. Meanwhile, the Humans will rain arrows and magic down on your head.



You can wheel the siege tower up to the city wall and climb up the upper Ramparts.

Protect the siege tower operators with ranged attackers at the field barricades or atop the tower itself.

Lay down enough support fire to either eliminate the Human aggressors or keep them occupied while the siege tower wheels closer and closer. Once the siege tower connects with the city wall, you can launch one of two attacks into the city.



An archer or a mage can use the barricades out in the field to return fire on the Stonehelm Ramparts.

First, the "bum rush." Essentially, your entire team picks an entry point and rushes as a coordinated team. The idea is to overwhelm the Human's defensive force at that entry point. Most human defenses will be spread out around the city, so you pick an area you think is weakly protected and outgun them. If you have a free moment, it's usually a good idea to open the main gate so you can swarm the main gate flag and future spawns can rush straight into the city.



[The Undead need to open the main gate door to swarm the city.]

Second, you can try the "divide and conquer" strategy. Split into two or three well-balanced teams [EM] ranged attackers supported by a tougher class like the warrior [EM] and launch simultaneous attacks at the entry points. While one team distracts the larger Human force, the other teams slip through the defenses to wreck havoc on the city. Once you slip into the city, it's easy to scatter and collect capture points.

Once inside the city, Undead players should look for open control points to flip them to your side.





Tip

Inside the city, Undead players should spread out and make flags their priority. Fighting Humans may be fun, but if you die before converting any flags, you will have failed to do your job.

You need to set up at least one Undead flag inside the city early on. It's critical to have that friendly flag so that your respawn can be set much closer to the fights and you won't have to run across the whole southern portion of the map just to get back into things. From one Undead flag inside the city gates, you can branch out and slowly overturn the Human defenses one by one.

Ledges like this one in the West Precinct can serve as great ambush points.



It's true that you're disadvantaged with the majority of flags in Human hands at the start, but keep in mind that you now have more flags to flip for experience points. Since the Humans will rarely venture out of the city, you don't really have to worry about a counterattack deep in your territory, and inside the city, you can flip lots of flags and power up your stats much quicker than a Human opponent can. Where they have the built-in tactical advantage, the Undead will win the battle if you can hold out long enough to boost your stats and spread some putrid green canvas throughout Stonehelm.



Vradek's Crossing



HOTSPOTS:

- Cliff Path
- Town Square
- Passage under the Old Wall
- Old Town flag area
- Wood bridge near Cliff flag
- South Gate hill
- Graveyard

Hotspots are frequently contested areas that hold key tactical value.

Lay of the Land



The Vradek's Crossing fortification houses lots of streets, doors, and tunnels for sudden action.



The humans want to hold the fort; the undead want to infiltrate and possess. In Vradek's Crossing, the large structure has many ins and outs and twisting passages, so you never know where the enemy might pop up next. Humans have to think defense first, while the undead have to outwit and outmaneuver to sneak to victory.

The Humans

The humans start at the top of the map in the Mansion Courtyard. Extend out and capture the Town Square flag and the Cliff flag. The undead keep their home flag in the Graveyard and will reach the Old Town flag first. Even so, you have a three-to-two flag advantage, which is enough to win if you play strong defense.



You begin somewhere near the Mansion Courtyard flag.



Defend the Mansion Courtyard flag from the stone building or hold the entry points.



If you choose to defend the Stonehelm Gate flag in the Mansion Courtyard, the two main avenues to the flag are the main path toward the Town Square and the street leading out to the Cliff path area. From your elevated platform around the flag, you should see the undead coming. You can also snipe from the stone building in the northwest corner. Two ranged specialists and a melee expert can hold this for a while.



The Town Square flag is surrounded by defensible buildings.



However, at the outset the human forces should split for the Town Square flag and the Cliff flag. You can gain the Town Square flag easily; you just have to hold it. Set up snipers in the buildings that ring the square, and send scouts out to warn of enemy advances and pick off invaders as they try to sneak through the gates or the tunnels under the Old Wall.



A small breach presents a shortcut between the Town Square and the Cliff area.



The quickest way to the Cliff area is to follow the path along the western shore from the Mansion Courtyard or take the shortcut wall breach that connects the Town Square and the Cliff area. Both bring you to the northeast corner of the plaza overlooking the Cliff flag.



It's a mage's dream around the Cliff with all its open space.



Ranged attackers, especially mages, will love the open area around the Cliff. Warriors and assassins will be dead shortly if they're caught out in the open here. Use the two buildings flanking the flag as cover to launch your ranged attacks or shield yourself from enemy fire.



The wooden bridge links the traditional human and undead territory.

South of the Cliff area, a stone bridge leads you down to the area west of Old Town, and a wood bridge below that connects to the field adjacent to the undead's home Graveyard area. The undead like to use the bridge to skirt around the main streets and attack the Cliff flag. If you can get troops down here fast enough, it makes a great choke point to hold back the enemy.



The passages under the Old Wall provide a second route to the western areas.



The breach will get you to the Cliff area, as will the tunnels that begin on the southwest corner of the Town Square and run under the Old Wall area. You can pass to and fro unseen through these tunnels, but you need to watch out for sneak attacks running through these tunnels too.



The Old Town is usually swarmed by undead early in the match.

Old Town will probably be a lost cause at first. The human strategy might not be to advance on Old Town—talk it out with your teammates first—but if you decide to make an assault, you will probably be coming down from the northern street. Watch out for a sniper position on the building to the east (reached by the walkway past the eastern gardens). Old Town sees a lot of traffic, so you need a force to hold the flag for very long.



A wooden walkway winds up to a sniper platform above the Old Town flag.



If you know the undead are outside the city, press forward and defend the South Gate and the hill beyond. A tough warrior can hold the cracked-open gate almost single-handedly, while a small group at the top of the hill where the only path runs up will cause the undead headaches.

Vradek's Crossing



The undead can only siege the main gates from one path up the South Gate hill.



It's unlikely that you will need to assault the undead flag directly if your team commits to defense; however, there might be cases where you need to make a sneak attack run or want to finish them off for good. The mausoleum on the left leads directly down to the flag, albeit through some cramped tunnels. Prepare for some close-combat fighting and hold off on area-effect spells such as Fireball or you might cripple your own team.



One assault on the undead stronghold strikes at the left mausoleum.



The right mausoleum appears barred, but a hole on the right wall drops you into a passage that mirrors the other mausoleum. The tunnel deposits you on the opposite side of the undead crypt. The flag rests in the center. Bring your A-game to the crypt because there's no room to hide.



It's key to hold the wooden bridge, which grants you multiple access points to the city.



The Undead



The undead begin entrenched in the Graveyard crypt.



As you might guess, the undead have to think opposite the humans on this map—offense first. You can't afford to sit back in your crypt corner, or else the humans will swarm out, grab the majority of capture points, and sit back on defense for the win.



A secret crypt tunnel sneaks you next to the Old Town flag.

You have three main avenues into the city: the crypt tunnel to the east, the South Gate in the map's center, and the wood bridge to the west.

You should shoot for the Old Town flag and/or the Cliff flag, though rushing up the crypt tunnel or running through the South Gate before the humans arrive will net you the Old Town flag quickly.

Rather than play defense, the undead should send assault squads out to the wood bridge. You must control this area (or the South Gate, which is more difficult to hold) or enter the rest of the city. The crypt tunnel can work, but it's too easily plugged up with an experienced human group defending near the Old Town exit.



The Old Town flag is usually your first target.



If you can't overrun the South Gate, look to the ruined building as a sniper position.



From the wood bridge, though, you can send expeditions up the stairs and into the Old Town area, or continue forward and pressure the Cliff flag. Given time, you can spread out to the Town Square, but with all its high foot traffic, you can't expect to hold it long.



It's key to hold the wooden bridge, which grants you multiple access points to the city.

If you hold the Cliff flag, Old Town, and the Graveyard flag, you can play a little defense of your own. The humans will be forced to come to you, giving you the edge in your defensive positions in the buildings around the Cliff flag or the streets around Old Town.



The Town Square flag sees lots of human traffic.

When you're ready for the farthest assault, branch up to the Mansion Courtyard via the shore route up the cliff path or a sneak attack through the main streets north of the Town Square. Should the Stonehelm Gate flag fall, you will have the humans begging for mercy.



A sneak attack through the streets can net you the Stonehelm Gate flag in the Mansion Courtyard.

Border Keep



HOTSPOTS:

- Top of hill by Holy Fortress flag
- Northern alcove by Vaults flag
- Ancient Keep stairs (both sides)
- Ancient Keep archway (both sides)
- Wooden crosswalk above Ancient Keep
- Back stairway leading to Catacombs
- Mounds by Catacombs flag
- Fortification by Dark Fortress flag

Hotspots are frequently contested areas that hold key tactical value.

Lay of the Land



The Ancient Keep and the Catacombs are two of the hotly contested areas of Border Keep.

At first glance, Border Keep looks like a nice, cozy map. It's on the small side, with a mirror-image layout—a home for the humans on one side, and a home for the undead on the other. Of course, no one's ever happy with just one home, so the war heats up in the middle at the neutral Ancient Keep and its surrounding hillside. For those who like their action hot and heavy with very little stealth or flanking maneuvers, Border Keep will satisfy your inner bloodlust.

The Humans

The battle is centered around the Ancient Keep, so it's not surprising that you begin at your spawn point closest to the middle ruins. The Vaults is a key strategic area for the humans. It allows quick access to the Ancient Keep should it fall into enemy hands, plus it's one step away from the inner sanctum itself, the Holy Fortress. Unless you have the rest of the map secured, you should worry if the Vaults fall.



You spawn near the Vaults flag.



Two archways lead out from under the massive stone gate, one out in the open and one hidden in shadows.

From a Vaults spawn, head east out one of the two main archways, toward the Ancient Keep. The archway on your right side lets in more sunlight; be careful that enemy archers and mages don't spot you and land a lucky blow in the light. The archway to the left offers shadowy cover—emerge from there to maximize your cover before plunging out into the open.



Tip

It's more important to hold the Ancient Keep and choke off the enemies from attacking your home capture points than it is to advance into enemy territory.



Head toward the stairs for your main assault.



Use the boulders, dead trees, and shrubs to assault the hill leading up to the Ancient Keep. Your main access is the wide staircase heading up into the courtyard with the flag. That's also where the enemy expects you to enter. Be careful and prepare for combat when you hit those stairs.



The corner tunnel brings you up into the Ancient Keep's courtyard for a surprise strike.



The secondary entrance lies in the corner tunnel to your right. Sneak up that broken ramp and it pops you right into the courtyard for an attack. Just watch out for a backstab from an enemy sitting on the corner ledge behind you.



Tip

When possible, always enter the Ancient Keep with a full stamina bar. To survive an immediate battle, you need all the sprinting power you can muster.



Circle the flag if you suspect any enemy contact.



Inside the courtyard, circle the pillars and spy for enemies near the flag or in the many hidden alcoves. As long as you stay a moving target, you'll be difficult to

Border Keep

track. The pillars offer protection from ranged attacks, even the priestess's Curse, and a sprinting character can close on an unsuspecting enemy quickly in the confined courtyard. Once you clear the courtyard, hold the capture point until your flag appears. The flag sits out in the open, so only one teammate should attempt to flip the flag, while all others take up defensive support around the courtyard.

Holding the Ancient Keep is even trickier. It's always possible that an enemy could circle around to the western stairs that you used to enter the courtyard—peek over your shoulder every once in a while to prevent a deadly backstab—but mostly concentrate your attention to the east. Archers and mages should grab the positions high up on the ruin walls or at the ledge that overlooks the enemy hillside (above the northeast corner tunnel). There they can offer cover fire and pick off enemies at range. Warriors and assassins can head down the main stairs, tunnel, or out into the hillside to slash away at incoming troops. If the enemy push looks severe, the warriors and assassins can hang back to support the main staircase or the tunnel. The priestesses should stay aware in the courtyard, healing injured teammates, throwing down brambles to slow incoming forces, and Cursing anyone foolish enough to be caught in your crossfire.



Either side can take advantage of the crosswalk above the ruins.

Don't be caught off guard by the crosswalk above the courtyard. Spiraling stone stairs lead up to the wooden crosswalk from opposite sides of the Ancient Keep. Ranged classes such as the archer and mage might try an assault from up on high. They can peer over the side and hit enemy targets with a bomb from above. Rely on the crosswalk when the enemy has the main stairs and tunnel heavily guarded.



From the crosswalk, you can peek down below and attack when you see an opportunity.



Once you control the Ancient Keep, you can go after the undead flags. The main approach leads down the hill and through the Catacombs' long, ruined hallway. If you attack from this direction, stick to the walls and use the corners as defensive positions. At the far end of the hallway, the stairs lead up to a platform and back down again into the main Catacombs area. Ranged attackers should fire from here, and melee specialists should charge from the platform to catch the enemy off-guard.



Tip

Control of the Ancient Keep means rapid deployment of troops to anywhere on the battlefield.



Rush the undead Catacombs flag by charging through the rubble-filled hall.

Inside the Catacombs, the fight generally occurs around the flag. Run up and down the corner mounds for maneuvering and weave between the cover if you need to recover mana or stamina.



Assault the Catacombs from the main entrance or the corner mounds.

The side staircase near the Catacombs' main hallway provides an alternate route that circles around behind the flag. You can try this angle, but keep in mind that the undead frequently use the staircase to emerge on the Ancient Keep hill, and you may run into them sooner than you planned.



The Catacombs' side stairwell can bring you out on top of the flag or smack into an enemy patrol.



Head east from the Catacombs' flag and you cut between two side passages to the sands in front of the Dark Fortress. From this angle, you have no choice but to run for the flag and battle anyone in between. A long wall prevents you from flanking the flag position from this direction, so it's brute force or nothing here.



From the Catacombs' flag it's a straight shot to the Dark Fortress flag.



Leave the Catacombs from the northern side and you have a few more options. You can still shoot up straight to the flag, though there are a few cover spots along the way in ruins' slabs and boulders.



Exit the Catacombs' northern side for an alternate route to the Dark Fortress.



If you stay to your left, you'll spot a staircase that leads to the building in the map's northeast corner. This is the one direction you can flank the Dark Fortress flag. If the enemy doesn't see you coming,

circle around from this direction, and you have a clean side shot at whoever guards the final unholy flag.



Sneak up and approach the Dark Fortress flag from the northeast building.

Of course, don't forget about your own flag in the rear. Even though you begin the game at the Vaults and most of the action is in the map's center, you may need to retreat to your Holy Fortress when you lose a spawn point or want to defend your capture point.



The human flag by the Holy Fortress stands far from the central Ancient Keep.



Tip

Trap the enemy team at their far spawn point and you effectively bottleneck the map.

The undead can attack from two avenues. The main approach comes straight up the hill. Wait for the attack up top and hope that they run out of stamina or mana while you spray them at range. The elevated terrain gives you the advantage for firing missiles and charging down for a sudden attack.



Guard both avenues to the Holy Fortress flag—the main hill and the secret side stairway.

There's a deep ravine to your left. Be careful not to slip to your death on that side of the hill. But it's not impassable. A secret side stairway winds down the hill and into the far side, leading out to the Vaults. A clever undead player might emerge from the shadows there, so keep one eye on the stairs and one on the main hill at all times.

As a preemptive strike, set up ambushes in the Vaults using the architecture to place your sniper. A nice wall just behind the flag affords you with cover on three sides and gives you a wide range of sight. This defense point also allows you more options when defending against an assault on the fortress. Kill anyone going through here before they can storm the castle.

The Undead

On the Border Keep map, with both side's terrain and capture points virtually identical, the undead play similar to the humans with only subtle differences. To start, the undead spawn at the Catacombs but have the same goal—seize the Ancient Keep as quickly and thoroughly as possible.



The undead begin in the Catacombs.



The most direct route to the Ancient Keep lies through the Catacombs' hallway.



Leave the Catacombs through the ruined hallway and you arrive at the foot of the Ancient Keep hill. Navigate quickly up the hill if you think speed will help you capture the neutral flag in the courtyard; otherwise, bounce back and forth between cover spots and search for enemy targets amid the ruined walls.



The same access points into the Ancient Keep courtyard exist for the undead.

A team of three might hit the courtyard from all three access points—the main staircase, the corner tunnel,

and the wooden crosswalk above. Coordinating the timing might be tricky, but it's highly effective. Set your toughest character on the stairs, because he often gets spotted first and can engage quickly. This should distract the enemy, though, leaving clean shots for the tunnel and crosswalk teammates. No matter what, keep moving and attacking until you dispatch all the enemies in the courtyard and then, and only then, convert the flag to your cause.



Take the courtyard flag from different directions when you have multiple attackers.



Descending the hill to the human territory works similar to ascending to the Ancient Keep. Use your terrain wisely and team up on single enemies to overwhelm and overrun. The left gateway lies more in the sunlight and you'll be better hidden in the shadows to the right.



The left gateway into the Vault leaves you more vulnerable.



After you grab the Vaults flag, the fastest attack route leads off to the left and around the corner. At the top of the hill, you discover the Holy Fortress drawbridge and the last human flag. The humans most likely will have guards—and they have the elevated advantage for missiles—so tread carefully.

Travel around the corner of the Vaults and up the hill to reach the Holy Fortress.

With two attackers, flank out to either side and try to catch the defenders in a crossfire. Worst case, they will split up and drop the odds to one on one, which may present you with a favorable match-up. If



you have the numbers, press the advantage, even if it means losing one attacker to inflict heavy blows on the enemy. Send some warriors up the middle of the field while an assassin or two sneaks up from the side. Neutralize any defenders quickly to make the job easier; however, in the end, it only matters that the flag flies green.

Don't forget that you can also assault from the secret side staircase from the Vaults. It takes longer to navigate this route; however, if you're going it alone, you may want to sneak along the edge of the hill after the staircase and slip up behind the human defenses.



Turn the Holy Fortress dark with an undead tapestry.

Set up snipers on the steps to each side of the flag, up near the fortress, to watch over the flag. There are also several projections on the building's sides to hide behind as you defend this point. Stay out of the open area that approaches the flag, because it's right in the line of fire from enemy snipers hiding behind the outcroppings of the Catacombs. Use the side passages to approach and hold the Catacombs flag when you can. Watch for ambushes from the right and left of the flag itself, and be sure to defend the small hallway situated behind the Catacombs flag.

If you have time, there's an awesome ambush point



Look straight down on the Catacombs flag from a high vantage point near the Dark Fortress.



The side staircase can also aid your stealth attack on the Holy Fortress.

Even though you start at the Catacombs, you can't leave the Dark Fortress unattended against a human offensive. In case of an attack, you have options on the defense. The easiest route is to go up the hill backward, so you can watch for potential attacks. The map dead-ends behind you, so you should be safe. From the top of the hill, archers, priestesses, and mages can rain down destruction on the choke point near the flag. Assassins can also slip on their invisibility Cloak and sneak up on unwary humans camping the capture point.

You can also move out to either side. The northeast



Retreat to the top of the Dark Fortress to play defense.

building holds shelter from ranged attacks and prying eyes, while the flats south of the flag offer a great spying point down on the Catacombs flag.



A ledge above the Catacombs exit serves as a perfect ambush point.

in the side passage just outside the Catacombs. From the exit leading east out of the Catacombs, make your first left and run up the stairs to a small ledge that skirts the outside wall. You can overlook the flats in front of the Dark Fortress or a few steps can bring you back over the exit from the Catacombs to the Dark Fortress area. Anyone can wipe a single opponent from the hidden ledge, whether it's an archer's arrow, assassin's backstab, warrior's Running Charge, priestess's unseen Curse, or mage's spell of choice.

If you're playing solo, or you've just joined a server, figure out whether your team is attacking or defending, and get into the fray. Hold or breach the archways or tunnels into the keep, and continue pressuring the nearby adversaries until your teammates arrive and engage where necessary. Keep in mind that if you join this map late, especially in a campaign, you won't gain much experience or skill levels. Maintain a safe defensive position, and choose your shots carefully. If you have to ride your teammates' coattails for a while, that's okay. You'll pick up the slack once you have a few skills in hand and can dish it out with the best of them.

Nelsham's Scar



HOTSPOTS:

- Intersection above the Crypt Gate flag
- Archway in front of the Mines flag
- Drop-off point near West Bridge flag
- West Bridge
- West entrance into Earthworks
- East Bridge
- East entrance into Earthworks
- The Earthworks (lower level)
- The Earthworks (upper level)
- Ledge near Barren Ravine flag

Hotspots are frequently contested areas that hold key tactical value.

Lay of the Land



Protect your allies and slay your enemies on the many battles around the bridges of Nelsham's Scar.

Two bridges over a deep chasm hold the keys to victory on this medium-sized map. Nelsham's Scar gives each opposing team a starting flag at the far edge of their territory; four neutral flags are up for grabs at various points around the map's center. Learning how to move between the map's elevations makes a speedy difference when flipping capture points, and you better know how to shoot at range—and avoid incoming shots—if you hope to survive life on the bridges.

The Humans



The humans spawn in one of two houses behind the Barren Ravine flag.

Unlike Border Keep where your initial spawn places you near the center of the battlefield, Nelsham's Scar spawns you back in your territory. The humans emerge from one of two houses connected by plank bridges. It's as deep as you can get on the map; once you head north toward the flag, you don't have to worry about an enemy sneaking up from behind you.



Guard your home flag from the protected ledges flanking the capture point.

At the outset, speed toward the neutral capture points. Later in the game, you may need to protect your home flag. If you find yourself forced to spawn back at the Barren Ravine, or you retreat to defend it, stay close to the walls. The flag lies in a narrow, flat ravine cramped by stone ledges running on either side. These ledges offer protection and slight elevation for ranged snipers. An assassin or warrior who needs to go hand to hand should kill any immediate threat and then slink into the shadows of the rock outcropping just north of the Barren Ravine flag.



The tunnels around the Earthworks will be hotly contested once the battle truly ensues.

For a quick score, target the Earthworks first. Sprint out of the Barren Ravine and take the left cavern tunnel. Follow the tunnel around to the right and you'll spy the neutral flag at the base of the Earthworks staircase.



Tip

In case of enemy contact, ranged classes should fire down the Earthworks' staircase before descending on foot.

Once the undead invade your side of the map, expect the Earthworks to be a hotspot of activity. With three passages intersecting at the bottom level and the staircase leading to another major intersection above, it's a well-traveled area to say the least. Keep a paranoid attitude at this capture point, glancing down the passages and up the stairs every few seconds.

Nelsham's Scar



Exit the Earthworks to the East Bridge.



Your second neutral capture point will probably be the East Bridge. The north passage from the Earthworks flag leads out into the open area with the two bridges. Straight ahead at the top of the bridge lies the East Bridge flag. You can also turn left and vault up the series of small ledges and, if you time it right, leap up onto the West Bridge. A miss, however, could plummet you into the chasm or leave you a sitting duck for someone on the West Bridge. The East Bridge flag is definitely easier pickings.



Your objective after the Earthworks is to capture the East Bridge flag.

After you have two neutral flags under control, expect opposition to heat up. The map is built so that each team can capture two neutral flags quickly; after that, it's going to be a heated battle of swapping positions. Archers, priestesses, and mages should always be on the lookout for potential targets on the bridges. Assassins and warriors should also be on the lookout—so they don't become those targets.



Fire freely along the bridge to catch distant enemies before they spot you.



Past the East Bridge, a long ledge leads across to the West Bridge. To reach the other bridge, you have to drop down, which causes 10–30 damage from the fall depending on how careful you are. From here, you can storm the West Bridge flag or descend the Mines staircase to a neutral flag in undead territory.



On the north side, the fastest way to cross from east to west is to drop off the ledge above the Mines staircase.



Because the bridges hold tactical importance, you'll probably attack the West Bridge capture point next. If it's not neutral, keep an eye out for enemies hidden behind the columns or appearing suddenly at their new spawn point. The walls around the West Bridge flag protect you well from missiles fired off the East Bridge, and you can see far down the staircase leading to the Mines for attacks from that direction. The closer Earthworks tunnel should draw most of your attention because it's the nearest spot from which enemies can launch unexpected attacks.

You can set up ambushes on various catwalks and ledges, and a sniper holding the West Bridge can easily target and defend the East Bridge as well. In particular, a cubbyhole just to the northeast side of the flag is the perfect spot to defend the flag and keep the upper ledge of the Mines clear. You cannot see the stairs leading to the Mines flag from here though.



Tip

Around enemy capture points, watch for the sudden appearance of respawning enemies.



If neutral flags are still available, capture the West Bridge and then turn around to head down to the Mines flag.



After you control the bridge flags, or if you need some experience from an easier capture point, descend the stairs on the north end of the West Bridge. Turn left at the first arch and you'll see the Mines flag straight ahead. Unfortunately, the flag lies in an open area with access on both its sides. While sitting on this flag, swivel back and forth to avoid a sudden backstab.



Descend the stairs, weapon at the ready, and assault the final neutral capture point.

The only remaining capture point lies in the heart of undead territory—the Crypt Gate flag. Follow the passage behind the Mines flag and continue north. The passage dips down and levels out at the long staircase ascending to the undead flag.



The underground passages lead up the long stairway to the Crypt Gate flag.

It's usually quiet here—all the action tends to occur on the bridges and the nearby capture points. That doesn't mean you should drop your guard. Undead could be using the tunnels to enter the battle, or they may be camped at the top of the long stairs guarding the flag.



A sneak attack can secure the undead's home flag.

Sprint up the stairs and do not camp it right away. Duck off to the left or right and swing around to view the Chimney and Lower Workings areas. You need to ensure that no undead have set up defense. If they have, dance around and work your combat magic. Once things are free and clear, drop down on the undead flag and give it some civil, human colors.

The Undead



The undead begin around the Crypt Gate capture point.

The undead strategy basically follows the same course as the human strategy, only reversed. You set out from the Crypt Gate flag and want to end up on the Barren Ravine flag, or at least as close to it as possible with the majority of capture points under your team's control.



Caution

It's easy to kill yourself on this map. Be careful when you run around a corner or you might plummet off a ledge to your death.

Nelsham's Scar

In the Crypt Gate area, you spawn on either side of the flag. At the outset, you have no worries from human enemies; later in the game, watch for sneak attacks coming up the long stairs. Attacks coming from the main stairs are much easier to deal with because you can see foes coming a mile away. The Chimney building holds lots of landings for snipers, and with a little effort, you can target anyone in the flats or coming up the long stairway from the mines.



The upper stairs direct you to the bridges quickly.

The main stairs take you around a wall and directly out the ledge by the East Bridge. If you want to jump immediately into the fray, push for the East Bridge flag as your first target, but bring a friend or two as there's bound to be bloodshed.



The left tunnel out of the undead's home base winds up to the Mines flag.

The safer approach to free experience points will be the Mines flag. Both tunnels under the main bridge in the Crypt Gate area bring you to the Mines flag. The left side runs by the Mines itself and takes you a few extra steps out the way; the right tunnel heads there directly. Use them both throughout the course of the game to change up your movement pattern and throw off the enemy. If you know an enemy lies on one side or the other, surprise him by using the opposite tunnel.



The right tunnel slips around to the Mines flag on a more direct route.



Once you have the Mines flag, you can jog up the Mines staircase on the outer ledge and climb up to the West Bridge. Expect resistance here at either the tunnel entrance to the Earthworks (straight ahead) or ranged fire from the East Bridge (off to your left).



The Mines staircase leads up to the West Bridge.



The battle for the bridge flags tests your combat strengths. Assassins have a great hiding spot near the West Bridge flag on the broken stairs immediately next to the capture point; hide invisibly on the stairs and then slip down and backstab someone attempting to roll down their flag. With little cover until you reach the middle of the bridges, warriors should sprint out to tackle enemies and then rest up behind the cover of broken walls.



Tip

Assassins excel on this map with its many corners from which to launch a backstab. Plus, it's dark enough in the tunnels that they can easily hide in shadows, waiting for that juicy, passing target.



Watch all directions as you capture the West Bridge flag.



Ranged classes have lots of options. Various points around the bridges can serve as ambush locations—the ledges, the tunnel entrances, the wooden catwalks near the East Bridge, even the lower ledge near the Mines flag. Use cover in between volleys, and if an enemy closes, duck behind a wall or corner and ready an arrow or spell for a point-blank kill.

Caution

Never stand still while capturing a flag, especially on the bridges. Circle-dance around the flagpole until the flag flips and you can rush off to another encounter.



Clip an enemy from around the broken walls near the West Bridge flag, or use the walls as cover to arc arrows over on the East Bridge.

Even with strong cover, strafe back and forth across your bridge while attacking others. Unless a horde of enemy players blocks one side, it doesn't pay to stay in a location, even a well-defended spot. One curved Fireball could be lights out if you're not careful.



The wooden catwalks and rickety staircases serve as great ambush points for the long-range attacker.

Once you have a bridge location secured, you probably want to switch your spawn point there. Now when you die, you pop right back on the front lines.

Most likely, the battle will be won by whichever side holds the bridges. The non-bridge points are farther out; it takes longer to convert them and it's tougher to defend those distant points unless you leave dedicated men behind, which then opens up the middle of the



A careful approach on the Earthworks flag is advised.

map around the bridges.

Aid your teammates around the bridges first and foremost. If the defense is well in hand, or you want to drop off for a surprise raid, you need to cross through the ever-dangerous Earthworks area. The West Bridge takes you to the upper level, which delivers you to the human's Barren Ravine with a lot less pain most of the time. The East Bridge leads to the lower level, and the Earthworks flag there tends to stack up a lot of combatants at its choke point.



Cross the planks to reach the human home flag in the Barren Ravine.

Unless you have the numbers, skip the Earthworks (the flag will probably switch back quickly anyway) and slide around to the back of the human territory for a true sneak attack. The plank bridge off to your right curves around to the flag, and it's a good elevated point for ranged attackers to get a look at the ground defense. Watch for humans along the ravine walls, and remember that their spawn point lies behind the flag in the two buildings at the rear. If you have them down to a single capture point, the humans will be filing out of the two buildings like mad, but you can taste victory on the blood of their fallen bodies.

Nar-Heresh



HOTSPOTS:

- The Threshold
- Corridors leading from the Threshold into the Undead complex
- Inner Sanctum
- Walkways around the Inner Sanctum
- The Warren leading up to the Altar
- Torture Chamber

Hotspots are frequently contested areas that hold key tactical value.

Lay of the Land

The Undead control the whole underground complex—well, all but one Human flag. The real estate is basically the Undead's to lose, with the Humans only working from their spawn point in the Entry Hall. At first, the map can be a confusing sprawl of labyrinths and warrens, so to be successful you have to memorize the twists and turns and avoid a wrong move at a critical juncture.

The Humans

The Entry Hall is the only Human starting flag.

Your backs are up against the wall in this map. You may have the edge in the Campaign to this point, but it will take all your skills and teamwork to conquer Nar-Heresh.

There is no sense sitting around in the Entry Hall where you spawn; you will slowly lose as the Undead control five flags to your one.

Step on the discolored stone to rotate the stone bridge to hook up with the Threshold platform.

Launch into the map from the word "go." It's usually best to assault in two or three well-coordinated groups. You desperately need to secure a foothold inside the Undead territory; with a second flag, your respawns can now occur closer to the battle and you save precious time.

You seize the Threshold from the ground level, but watch out for snipers from above.



Tip

The Humans will do well to send at least one assassin out into the Undead complex cloaked and hiding from the enemy. Flipping flags behind the main defense can be a huge help.

Jump the gap at the top of the long stone stairway to reach the top ledge.

At the start, send a team with at least one ranged attacker up the long stairs to the ledge above the Threshold



area. While your ranged attacker(s) fires down on any defenders near the Threshold flag, the rest of the team runs down the broken stairs that connect to the main platform near the Undead's first flag. At the same time, one or two teammates should stand on the turntable square and rotate the bridge to open the way from the Entry Hall.



The top ledge spirals down to a second gap. Leap that one and you land on the corridor next to the Threshold.

You need to assault Nar-Heresh in an exact sequence: Threshold, Mausoleum, Boneyard, Altar, and Inner Sanctum. Since, the Undead know you're heading in that order, you may want to try some maneuvers to disrupt their thinking.



If the gates are still down, move up through the corridors to the Labyrinth flag.

One tactic you can try is the "feint." Send one or two players toward the largest Undead force. Have the loners engage the enemy and stir up lots of combat, hopefully drawing the Undead's attention. As more Undead zero in on those coordinates, your main force should be less hassled as you take over control points.



To bypass the sealed gates, climb to the top of the Labyrinth and drop down onto the corridors that lead deeper into Nar-Heresh.

Nar-Heresh

Time is not on your side until you gain flags. You will have the advantage of flipping early enemy flags and gaining extra experience (the Undead don't have this advantage since they start with the five already converted flags).

Extend the two skeletal hands to form a bridge to the Inner Sanctum.



The Undead



With all the elevated platforms around the map, peek over the top of stairs to avoid nasty surprises.



If you look at the overall map setup for Nar-Heresh, the Undead flags are set up in a square pattern with the Inner Sanctum in the center. From the Inner Sanctum, it's about equal distance to defend the other flags, so it should become your primary staging point. Make the Inner Sanctum your default respawn point if you don't know where the action is going to take place.



The Inner Sanctum stands as the cornerstone of the Undead defense. Don't let it fall!

The wide-open space around the Altar makes it difficult to defend against ranged attackers.

Staying on defense is how you win this map. Ideally, you want to hold your five control points to the Human's one, but



even if you slip up and let one flag fall, you're still up four to two. If two fall, it's even up, and you'll have to do a little work to gain the flag majority back.

The Threshold stands closest to the enemy and will be a constant source of strife. Be careful not to over-commit there and leave your other flags vulnerable; it's an acceptable loss as long as you have four more flags under your control. If the Threshold falls, defend the Mausoleum. Be careful that the Humans haven't sent a second force to attack the Labyrinth area at the same time as they assault the Threshold. You also have to watch that Humans don't jump to the higher levels in the Labyrinth and invade the inner corridors of Nar-Heresh, where they can open the locked gates.



Know where your closed gates are to either open them to invade the outer perimeter or guard them against intruders.

An assassin can prove very useful. Hide in the shadows, backstab from the corners or around turns—an assassin can take serious advantage of the gloomy Nar-Heresh terrain. A priestess will aid tremendously too. Remember that you only have to hold your existing flags. A priestess lobbing around lots of Brambles will put the Humans in a quagmire, and every second that goes by helps your cause. Also, at critical corridor junctures, a smart priestess can set up a Restoration Sphere to heal companions and corrupt any Humans trying to pass through it.

Snipe at your enemies on the balcony above the Boneyard archway.



As the Undead, survival is really in your hands. You need to play smart and adapt to the Human's game plan.

Even if you can maintain a one-for-one flag swap with the Humans—they take a flag, you take a flag back—you will outmatch them. It's when you spread yourself too thin and run around trying to notch kills that you will run into trouble.

Dark Messiah[®] MIGHT AND MAGIC[™]

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HAS JUST
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